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CONTAINING

Rasselas Prince of Abissinia.

Henrietta.

Nourjahad.

Felicia to Charlotte.

The Creole.

The Invisible Spy.



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THE
HISTORY
OF
RASSELAS,
PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.
A TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY DR. JOHNSON.



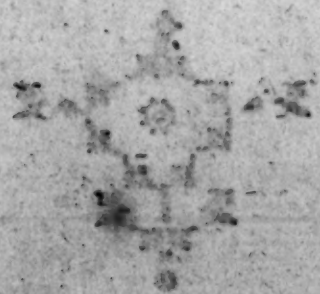
L O N D O N :

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THE
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 OF
 K. A. S. E. L. A. S.
 PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.
 A TALE

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THE
HISTORY
OF
RASSELAS,
PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

CHAP. I.

DESCRIPTION OF A PALACE IN A
VALLEY.

YE who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow; attend to the history of Rasselas prince of Abissinia.

Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty emperor, in whose dominions the Father of Waters begins his course; whose bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over half the world the harvests of Egypt.

According to the custom which has descended from age to age among the monarchs of the torrid zone, Rasselas was confined in a private palace, with the other sons and daughters of Abissinian royalty, till the order of succession should call him to the throne.

The place, which the wisdom or policy of antiquity had destined for the

residence of the Abissinian princes, was a spacious valley in the kingdom of Amhara, surrounded on every side by mountains, of which the summits overhang the middle part. The only passage, by which it could be entered, was a cavern that passed under a rock, of which it has long been disputed whether it was the work of nature or of human industry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood, and the mouth which opened into the valley was closed with gates of iron, forged by the artificers of ancient days, so massy that no man could without the help of engines open or shut them.

From the mountains on every side, rivulets descended that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, and formed a lake in the middle inhabited by fish of every species, and frequented by every fowl whom nature has taught to dip the wing in water. This lake discharged its superfluities by a stream which entered a dark cleft of the mountain on the northern side, and fell with dreadful noise from precipice to precipice till it was heard no more.

The sides of the mountains were covered with trees, the banks of the brooks were diversified with flowers; every blast

blew

shook spices from the rocks, and every month dropped fruits upon the ground. All animals that bite the grass, or brouse the shrub, whether wild or tame, wandered in this extensive circuit, secured from beasts of prey by the mountains which confined them. On one part were flocks and herds feeding in the pastures, on another all the beasts of chase frisking in the lawns; the sprightly kid was bounding on the rocks, the subtle monkey frolicking in the trees, and the solemn elephant reposing in the shade. All the diversities of the world were brought together, the blessings of nature were collected, and it's evils extracted and excluded.

The valley, wide and fruitful, supplied it's inhabitants with the necessities of life, and all delights and superfluities were added at the annual visit which the emperor paid his children, when the iron gate was opened to the sound of music; and during eight days every one that resided in the valley was required to propose whatever might contribute to make seclusion pleasant, to fill up the vacancies of attention, and lessen the tediousness of time. Every desire was immediately granted. All the artificers of pleasure were called to gladden the festivity; the musicians exerted the power of harmony, and the dancers shewed their activity before the princes, in hope that they should pass their lives in this blissful captivity, to which those only were admitted whose performance was thought able to add novelty to luxury. Such was the appearance of security and delight which this retirement afforded, that they, to whom it was new, always desired that it might be perpetual; and as those, on whom the iron gate had once closed, were never suffered to return, the effect of longer experience could not be known. Thus every year produced new schemes of delight, and new competitors for imprisonment.

The palace stood on an eminence raised about thirty paces above the surface of the lake. It was divided into many squares or courts, built with greater or less magnificence, according to the rank of those for whom they were designed. The roofs were turned into arches of massy stone joined by a cement that grew harder by time, and the building stood from century to century defying the solstitial rains and equinoctial hurricanes, without need of reparation.

This house, which was so large as to be fully known to none but some ancient officers who successively inherited the secrets of the place, was built as if suspicion herself had dictated the plan. To every room there was an open and secret passage, every square had a communication with the rest, either from the upper stories by private galleries, or by subterranean passages from the lower apartments. Many of the columns had unsuspected cavities, in which a long race of monarchs had repositied their treasures. They then closed up the opening with marble, which was never to be removed but in the utmost exigencies of the kingdom; and recorded their accumulations in a book which was itself concealed in a tower not entered but by the emperor, attended by the prince who stood next in succession.

CHAP. II.

THE DISCONTENT OF RASSELAS IN THE HAPPY VALLEY.

HERE the sons and daughters of Abissinia lived only to know the soft vicissitudes of pleasure and repose, attended by all that were skilful to delight, and gratified with whatever the senses can enjoy. They wandered in gardens of fragrance, and slept in the fortresses of security. Every art was practised to make them pleased with their own condition. The sages who instructed them, told them of nothing but the miseries of publick life, and described all beyond the mountains as regions of calamity, where discord was always raging, and where man preyed upon man.

To heighten their opinion of their own felicity, they were daily entertained with songs, the subject of which was the *happy valley*. Their appetites were excited by frequent enumerations of different enjoyments, and revelry and merriment was the business of every hour from the dawn of morning to the close of even.

These methods were generally successful; few of the princes had ever wished to enlarge their bounds, but passed their lives in full conviction that they had all within their reach that art or nature could bestow, and pitied those whom fate had excluded from this seat of tranquillity, as the sport of chance and the slaves of misery.

Thus

Thus they rose in the morning and lay down at night, pleased with each other and with themselves, all but Rasselas, who in the twenty-sixth year of his age began to withdraw himself from their pastimes and assemblies, and to delight in solitary walks and silent meditation. He often sat before tables covered with luxury, and forgot to taste the dainties that were placed before him: he rose abruptly in the midst of the song, and hastily retired beyond the sound of musick. His attendants observed the change, and endeavoured to renew his love of pleasure: he neglected their officiousness, repulsed their invitations, and spent day after day on the banks of rivulets sheltered with trees, where he sometimes listened to the birds in the branches, sometimes observed the fish playing in the stream, and anon cast his eyes upon the pastures and mountains filled with animals, of which some were biting the herbage, and some sleeping among the bushes.

This singularity of his humour made him much observed. One of the sages, in whose conversation he had formerly delighted, followed him secretly, in hope of discovering the cause of his disquiet. Rasselas, who knew not that any one was near him, having for some time fixed his eyes upon the goats that were brouising among the rocks, began to compare their condition with his own.

'What,' said he, 'makes the difference between man and all the rest of the animal creation? Every beast that strays beside me has the same corporal necessities with myself; he is hungry and crops the grass, he is thirsty and drinks the stream, his thirst and hunger are appeased, he is satisfied and sleeps; he rises again and is hungry, he is again fed and is at rest. I am hungry and thirsty like him, but when thirst and hunger cease I am not at rest; I am, like him, pained with want, but am not, like him, satisfied with solace. The intermediate hours are tedious and gloomy; I long again to be hungry that I may again quicken my attention. The birds peck the berries or the corn, and fly away to the groves where they sit in seeming happiness on the branches, and waste their lives in tuning one unvaried series of sounds. I likewise can call the luteist and the singer, but the sounds that pleased me yesterday weary me to-

day, and will grow yet more wearisome to-morrow. I can discover within me no power of perception which is not glutted with it's proper pleasure, yet I do not feel myself delighted. Man surely has some latent sense for which this place affords no gratification, or he has some desires distinct from sense which must be satisfied before he can be happy.'

After this he lifted up his head, and seeing the moon rising, walked towards the palace. As he passed through the fields, and saw the animals around him, 'Ye,' said he, 'are happy, and need not envy me that walk thus among you, burdened with myself; nor do I, ye gentle beings, envy your felicity, for it is not the felicity of man. I have many distresses from which ye are free; I fear pain when I do not feel it; I sometimes shrink at evils recollected, and sometimes start at evils anticipated: surely the equity of Providence has balanced peculiar sufferings with peculiar enjoyments.'

With observations like these the prince amused himself as he returned, uttering them with a plaintive voice, yet with a look that discovered him to feel some complacency in his own perspicacity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life, from consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them. He mingled cheerfully in the diversions of the evening, and all rejoiced to find that his heart was lightened.

CHAP. III.

THE WANTS OF HIM THAT WANTS NOTHING.

ON the next day his old instructor, imagining that he had now made himself acquainted with his disease of mind, was in hope of curing it by counsel, and officiously sought an opportunity of conference, which the prince, having long considered him as one whose intellects were exhausted, was not very willing to afford. 'Why,' said he, 'does this man thus intrude upon me; shall I be never suffered to forget those lectures which pleased only while they were new, and to become new again must be forgotten?' He then walked into the wood, and composed himself to his

his usual meditations; when, before his thoughts had taken any settled form, he perceived his pursuer at his side, and was at first prompted by his impatience to go hastily away; but, being unwilling to offend a man whom he had once revered and still loved, he invited him to sit down with him on the bank.

The old man, thus encouraged, began to lament the change which had been lately observed in the prince, and to enquire why he so often retired from the pleasures of the palace, to loneliness and silence. 'I fly from pleasure,' said the prince, 'because pleasure has ceased to please; I am lonely because I am miserable, and am unwilling to cloud with my presence the happiness of others.'—'You, Sir,' said the sage, 'are the first who has complained of misery in the *happy valley*. I hope to convince you that your complaints have no real cause. You are here in full possession of all that the emperor of Abissinia can bestow; here is neither labour to be endured nor danger to be dreaded, yet here is all that labour or danger can procure or purchase. Look round and tell me which of your wants is without supply; if you want nothing, how are you unhappy?'

'That I want nothing,' said the prince, 'or that I know not what I want, is the cause of my complaint; if I had any known want, I should have a certain wish; that wish would excite endeavour, and I should not then repine to see the sun move so slowly towards the western mountain, or lament when the day breaks, and sleep will no longer hide me from myself. When I see the kids and the lambs chasing one another, I fancy that I should be happy if I had something to pursue. But, possessing all that I can want, I find one day and one hour exactly like another, except that the latter is still more tedious than the former. Let your experience inform me how the day may now seem as short as in my childhood, while nature was yet fresh, and every moment shewed me what I never had observed before. I have already enjoyed too much; give me something to desire.'

The old man was surprised at this new species of affliction, and knew not what to reply, yet was unwilling to be silent. 'Sir,' said he, 'if you had seen the miseries of the world, you would

know how to value your present state.'—'Now,' said the prince, 'you have given me something to desire; I shall long to see the miseries of the world, since the sight of them is necessary to happiness.'

CHAP. IV.

THE PRINCE CONTINUES TO GRIEVE AND MUSE.

AT this time the sound of musick proclaimed the hour of repast, and the conversation was concluded. The old man went away sufficiently discontented, to find that his reasonings had produced the only conclusion which they were intended to prevent. But in the decline of life shame and grief are of short duration; whether it be that we bear easily what we have borne long; or that, finding ourselves in age less regarded, we less regard others; or, that we look with slight regard upon afflictions, to which we know that the hand of death is about to put an end.

The prince, whose views were extended to a wider space, could not speedily quiet his emotions. He had been before terrified at the length of life which nature promised him, because he considered that in a long time much must be endured; he now rejoiced in his youth, because in many years much might be done.

This first beam of hope, that had been ever darted into his mind, rekindled youth in his cheeks, and doubled the lustre of his eyes. He was fired with the desire of doing something, though he knew not yet with distinctness either end or means.

He was now no longer gloomy and unsocial; but, considering himself as master of a secret stock of happiness, which he could enjoy only by concealing it, he affected to be busy in all schemes of diversion, and endeavoured to make others pleased with the state of which he himself was weary. But pleasures never can be so multiplied or continued, as not to leave much of life unemployed; there were many hours, both of the night and day, which he could spend without suspicion in solitary thought. The load of life was much lightened; he went eagerly into the assemblies, because he supposed the frequency of his presence necessary

necessary to the success of his purposes; he retired gladly to privacy, because he had now a subject of thought.

His chief amusement was to picture to himself that world which he had never seen; to place himself in various conditions; to be entangled in imaginary difficulties, and to be engaged in wild adventures: but his benevolence always terminated his projects in the relief of distress, the detection of fraud, the defeat of oppression, and the diffusion of happiness.

Thus passed twenty months of the life of Rasselas. He busied himself so intensely in visionary bustle, that he forgot his real solitude; and, amidst hourly preparations for the various incidents of human affairs, neglected to consider by what means he should mingle with mankind.

One day, as he was sitting on a bank, he feigned to himself an orphan virgin robbed of her little portion by a treacherous lover, and crying after him for restitution and redress. So strongly was the image impressed upon his mind, that he started up in the maid's defence, and run forward to seize the plunderer with all the eagerness of real pursuit. Fear naturally quickens the flight of guilt. Rasselas could not catch the fugitive with his utmost efforts; but, resolving to weary by perseverance, him whom he could not surpass in speed, he pressed on till the foot of the mountain stopped his course.

Here he recollected himself, and smiled at his own useless impetuosity. Then raising his eyes to the mountain—'This,' said he, 'is the fatal obstacle that hinders at once the enjoyment of pleasure, and the exercise of virtue. How long is it that my hopes and wishes have flown beyond this boundary of my life, which yet I never have attempted to surmount!

Struck with this reflection, he sat down to muse; and remembered, that since he first resolved to escape from his confinement, the sun had passed twice over him in his annual course. He now felt a degree of regret with which he had never been before acquainted. He considered how much might have been done in the time which had passed, and left nothing real behind it. He compared twenty months with the life of man. 'In life,' said he, 'is not to be counted the ignorance of infancy, or imbecility of age. We are long before we

are able to think, and we soon cease from the power of acting. The true period of human existence may be reasonably estimated at forty years, of which I have mused away the four and twentieth part. What I have lost was certain, for I have certainly possessed it; but of twenty months to come who can assure me?

The consciousness of his own folly pierced him deeply, and he was long before he could be reconciled to himself. 'The rest of my time,' said he, 'has been lost by the crime or folly of my ancestors, and the absurd institutions of my country; I remember it with disgust, yet without remorse: but the months that have passed since new light darted into my soul, since I formed a scheme of reasonable felicity, have been squandered by my own fault. I have lost that which can never be restored: I have seen the sun rise and set for twenty months, an idle gazer on the light of heaven: in this time the birds have left the nest of their mother, and committed themselves to the woods and to the skies: the kid has forsaken the teat, and learned by degrees to climb the rocks in quest of independent sustenance. I only have made no advances, but am still helpless and ignorant. The moon, by more than twenty changes, admonished me of the flux of life; the stream that rolled before my feet upbraided my inactivity. I sat feasting on intellectual luxury, regardless alike of the examples of the earth, and the instructions of the planets. Twenty months are passed, who shall restore them?

These sorrowful meditations fastened upon his mind; he passed four months in resolving to lose no more time in idle resolves, and was awakened to more vigorous exertion, by hearing a maid, who had broken a porcelain cup, remark, that what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.

This was obvious; and Rasselas reproached himself that he had not discovered it, having not known, or not considered, how many useful hints are obtained by chance, and how often the mind, hurried by her own ardour to distant views, neglects the truths that lie open before her. He, for a few hours, regretted his regret, and from that time bent his whole mind upon the means

means of escaping from the valley of happiness.

CHAP. V.

THE PRINCE MEDITATES HIS ESCAPE.

HE now found that it would be very difficult to effect that which it was very easy to suppose effected. When he looked round about him, he saw himself confined by the bars of nature which had never yet been broken, and by the gate, through which none that once had passed it were ever able to return. He was now impatient as an eagle in a grate. He passed week after week in clambering the mountains, to see if there was any aperture which the bushes might conceal, but found all the summits inaccessible by their prominence. The iron gate he despaired to open; for it was not only secured with all the power of art, but was always watched by successive sentinels, and was by it's position exposed to the perpetual observation of all the inhabitants.

He then examined the cavern through which the waters of the lake were discharged; and, looking down at a time when the sun shone strongly upon it's mouth, he discovered it to be full of broken rocks, which, though they permitted the stream to flow through many narrow passages, would stop any body of solid bulk. He returned discouraged and dejected; but, having now known the blessing of hope, resolved never to despair.

In these fruitless searches he spent ten months. The time, however, passed cheerfully away: in the morning he rose with new hope, in the evening applauded his own diligence, and in the night slept sound after his fatigue. He met a thousand amusements which beguiled his labour, and diversified his thoughts. He discerned the various instincts of animals, and properties of plants, and found the place replete with wonders, of which he purposed to solace himself with the contemplation, if he should never be able to accomplish his flight; rejoicing that his endeavours, though yet unsuccessful, had supplied him with a source of inexhaustible enquiry.

But his original curiosity was not yet

abated; he resolved to obtain some knowledge of the ways of men. His wish still continued, but his hope grew less. He ceased to survey any longer the walls of his prison, and spared to search by new toils for interstices which he knew could not be found, yet determined to keep his design always in view, and lay hold on any expedient that time should offer.

CHAP. VI.

A DISSERTATION ON THE ART OF FLYING.

AMONG the artists that had been allured into the happy valley, to labour for the accommodation and pleasure of it's inhabitants, was a man eminent for his knowledge of the mechanick powers, who had contrived many engines both of use and recreation. By a wheel, which the stream turned, he forced the water into a tower, whence it was distributed to all the apartments of the palace. He erected a pavilion in the garden, around which he kept the air always cool by artificial showers. One of the groves, appropriated to the ladies, was ventilated by fans, to which the rivulet that run through it gave a constant motion; and instruments of soft musick were placed at proper distances, of which some played by the impulse of the wind, and some by the power of the stream.

This artist was sometimes visited by Rasselas, who was pleased with every kind of knowledge, imagining that the time would come when all his acquisitions should be of use to him in the open world. He came one day to amuse himself in his usual manner, and found the master busy in building a sailing chariot: he saw that the design was practicable upon a level surface, and with expressions of great esteem solicited it's completion. The workman was pleased to find himself so much regarded by the prince, and resolved to gain yet higher honours. 'Sir,' said he, 'you have seen but a small part of what the mechanick sciences can perform. I have been long of opinion, that instead of the tardy conveyance of ships and chariots, man might use the swifter migration of wings; that the fields of

air are open to knowledge, and that only ignorance and idleness need crawl upon the ground.

This hint rekindled the prince's desire of passing the mountains; having seen what the mechanist had already performed, he was willing to fancy that he could do more; yet resolved to enquire further, before he suffered hope to afflict him by disappointment. 'I am afraid,' said he to the artist, 'that your imagination prevails over your skill, and that you now tell me rather what you wish, than what you know. Every animal has his element assigned him; the birds have the air, and man and beasts the earth.'—'So,' replied the mechanist, 'fishes have the water, in which yet beasts can swim by nature, and men by art. He that can swim needs not despair to fly: to swim is to fly in a grosser fluid, and to fly is to swim in a subtler. We are only to proportion our power of resistance to the different density of matter through which we are to pass. You will be necessarily upborn by the air, if you can renew any impulse upon it, faster than the air can recede from the pressure.'

'But the exercise of swimming,' said the prince, 'is very laborious; the strongest limbs are soon wearied; I am afraid the act of flying will be yet more violent; and wings will be of no great use, unless we can fly further than we can swim.'

'The labour of rising from the ground,' said the artist, 'will be great, as we see it in the heavier domestick fowls, but as we mount higher, the earth's attraction, and the body's gravity, will be gradually diminished, till we shall arrive at a region where the man will float in the air without any tendency to fall: no care will then be necessary but to move forwards, which the gentlest impulse will effect. You, Sir, whose curiosity is so extensive, will easily conceive with what pleasure a philosopher, furnished with wings, and hovering in the sky, would see the earth, and all it's inhabitants, rolling beneath him, and presenting to him successively, by it's diurnal motion, all the countries within the same parallel. How must it amuse the pendent spectator to see the moving scene of land and ocean, cities and deserts! To sur-

vey with equal security the marts of trade, and the fields of battle; mountains infested by barbarians, and fruitful regions gladdened by plenty, and lulled by peace! How easily shall we then trace the Nile through all his passage; pass over to distant regions, and examine the face of nature from one extremity of the earth to the other!'

'All this,' said the prince, 'is much to be desired; but I am afraid that no man will be able to breathe in these regions of speculation and tranquillity. I have been told, that respiration is difficult upon lofty mountains, yet from these precipices, though so high as to produce great tenuity of air, it is very easy to fall: therefore I suspect, that from any height, where life can be supported, there may be danger of too quick descent.'

'Nothing,' replied the artist, 'will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must be first overcome. If you will favour my project, I will try the first flight at my own hazard. I have considered the structure of all volant animals, and find the folding continuity of the bat's wings most easily accommodated to the human form. Upon this model I shall begin my task to-morrow, and in a year expect to tower into the air beyond the malice and pursuit of man. But I will work only on this condition; that the art shall not be divulged, and that you shall not require me to make wings for any but ourselves.'

'Why,' said Rasselas, 'should you envy others so great an advantage? All skill ought to be exerted for universal good; every man has owed much to others, and ought to repay the kindness that he has received.'

'If men were all virtuous,' returned the artist, 'I should with great alacrity teach them all to fly. But what would be the security of the good, if the bad could at pleasure invade them from the sky? Against an army sailing through the clouds, neither walls, nor mountains, nor seas, could afford any security. A flight of northern savages might hover in the wind, and light at once with irresistible violence upon the capital of a fruitful region that was rolling under them. Even this valley, the retreat of princes, the abode of happiness, might be violated by the sudden

' sudden descent of some of the naked nations that swarm on the coast of the southern sea.'

The prince promised secrecy, and waited for the performance, not wholly hopeless of success. He visited the work from time to time, observed its progress, and remarked many ingenious contrivances to facilitate motion, and unite levity with strength. The artist was every day more certain that he should leave vultures and eagles behind him, and the contagion of his confidence seized upon the prince.

In a year, the wings were finished, and, on a morning appointed, the maker appeared furnished for flight, on a little promontory: he waved his pinions a while to gather air, then leaped from his stand, and in an instant dropped into the lake. His wings, which were of no use in the air, sustained him in the water, and the prince drew him to land, half dead with terror and vexation.

CHAP. VII.

THE PRINCE FINDS A MAN OF LEARNING.

THE prince was not much afflicted by this disaster, having suffered himself to hope for a happier event, only because he had no other means of escape in view. He still persisted in his design to leave the happy valley by the first opportunity.

His imagination was now at a stand: he had no prospect of entering into the world; and, notwithstanding all his endeavours to support himself, discontent by degrees preyed upon him, and he began again to lose his thoughts in sadness, when the rainy season, which in these countries is periodical, made it inconvenient to wander in the woods.

The rain continued longer and with more violence than had been ever known: the clouds broke on the surrounding mountains, and the torrents streamed into the plain on every side, till the cavern was too narrow to discharge the water. The lake overflowed its banks, and all the level of the valley was covered with the inundation. The eminence, on which the palace was built, and some other spots of rising ground, were all that the eye could now discover. The herds and flocks left the pastures, and both

the wild beasts and the tame retreated to the mountains.

This inundation confined all the princes to domestick amusements, and the attention of Rasselas was particularly seized by a poem, which Imlac rehearsed, upon the various conditions of humanity. He commanded the poet to attend him in his apartment, and recite his verses a second time; then entering into familiar talk, he thought himself happy in having found a man who knew the world so well, and could so skilfully paint the scenes of life. He asked a thousand questions about things, to which, though common to all other mortals, his confinement from childhood had kept him a stranger. The poet pitied his ignorance, and loved his curiosity, and entertained him from day to day with novelty and instruction, so that the prince regretted the necessity of sleep, and longed till the morning should renew his pleasure.

As they were sitting together, the prince commanded Imlac to relate his history, and to tell by what accident he was forced, or by what motive induced, to close his life in the happy valley. As he was going to begin his narrative, Rasselas was called to a concert, and obliged to restrain his curiosity till the evening.

CHAP. VIII.

THE HISTORY OF IMLAC.

THE close of the day is, in the regions of the torrid zone, the only season of diversion and entertainment, and it was therefore midnight before the musick ceased, and the princesses retired. Rasselas then called for his companion, and required him to begin the story of his life.

' Sir,' said Imlac, ' my history will not be long: the life that is devoted to knowledge passes silently away, and is very little diversified by events. To talk in publick, to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to enquire, and answer enquiries, is the business of a scholar. He wanders about the world without pomp or terror, and is neither known nor valued but by men like himself.

' I was born in the kingdom of Gouama, at no great distance from the fountain



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‘fountain of the Nile. My father was a wealthy merchant, who traded between the inland countries of Africk and the ports of the Red Sea. He was honest, frugal, and diligent, but of mean sentiments, and narrow comprehension: he desired only to be rich, and to conceal his riches, lest he should be spoiled by the governours of the province.’

‘Surely,’ said the prince, ‘my father must be negligent of his charge, if any man in his dominions dares take that which belongs to another. Does he not know that kings are accountable for injustice permitted as well as done? If I were emperor, not the meanest of my subjects should be oppressed with impunity. My blood boils when I am told that a merchant durst not enjoy his honest gains for fear of losing them by the rapacity of power. Name the governour who robbed the people, that I may declare his crimes to the emperor.’

‘Sir,’ said Imlac, ‘your ardour is the natural effect of virtue animated by youth: the time will come when you will acquit your father, and perhaps hear with less impatience of the governour. Oppression is, in the Abissinian dominions, neither frequent nor tolerated; but no form of government has been yet discovered, by which cruelty can be wholly prevented. Subordination supposes power on one part, and subjection on the other; and if power be in the hands of men, it will sometimes be abused. The vigilance of the supreme magistrate may do much, but much will still remain undone. He can never know all the crimes that are committed, and can seldom punish all that he knows.’

‘This,’ said the prince, ‘I do not understand, but I had rather hear thee than dispute. Continue thy narration.’

‘My father,’ proceeded Imlac, ‘originally intended that I should have no other education, than such as might qualify me for commerce; and discovering in me great strength of memory, and quickness of apprehension, often declared his hope that I should be some time the richest man in Abissinia.’

‘Why,’ said the prince, ‘did thy father desire the increase of his wealth,

when it was already greater than he durst discover or enjoy? I am unwilling to doubt thy veracity, yet inconsistencies cannot both be true.’

‘Inconsistencies,’ answered Imlac, ‘cannot both be right, but, imputed to man, they may both be true. Yet diversity is not inconsistency. My father might expect a time of greater security. However, some desire is necessary to keep life in motion, and he whose real wants are supplied, must admit those of fancy.’

‘This,’ said the prince, ‘I can in some measure conceive. I repent that I interrupted thee.’

‘With this hope,’ proceeded Imlac, ‘he sent me to school; but when I had once found the delight of knowledge, and felt the pleasure of intelligence and the pride of invention, I began silently to despise riches, and determined to disappoint the purpose of my father, whose grossness of conception raised my pity. I was twenty years old before his tenderness would expose me to the fatigue of travel, in which time I had been instructed, by successive masters, in all the literature of my native country. As every hour taught me something new, I lived in a continual course of gratifications; but, as I advanced towards manhood, I lost much of the reverence with which I had been used to look on my instructors; because, when the lesson was ended, I did not find them wiser or better than common men.’

‘At length my father resolved to initiate me in commerce, and opening one of his subterranean treasuries, counted out ten thousand pieces of gold. “This, young man,” said he, “is the stock with which you must negotiate. I began with less than the fifth part, and you see how diligence and parsimony have increased it. This is your own to waste or to improve. If you squander it by negligence or caprice, you must wait for my death before you will be rich: if, in four years, you double your stock, we will thenceforward let subordination cease, and live together as friends and partners; for he shall always be equal with me, who is equally skilled in the art of growing rich.”

‘We laid our money upon camels, concealed in bales of cheap goods, and travelled

“ travelled to the shore of the Red Sea. When I cast my eye on the expanse of waters, my heart bounded like that of a prisoner escaped. I felt an unextinguishable curiosity kindle in my mind, and resolved to snatch this opportunity of seeing the manners of other nations, and of learning sciences unknown in Abissinia.

“ I remembered that my father had obliged me to the improvement of my stock, not by a promise which I ought not to violate, but by a penalty which I was at liberty to incur; and therefore determined to gratify my predominant desire, and by drinking at the fountains of knowledge, to quench the thirst of curiosity.

“ As I was supposed to trade without connexion with my father, it was easy for me to become acquainted with the master of a ship, and procure a passage to some other country. I had no motives of choice to regulate my voyage; it was sufficient for me that, wherever I wandered, I should see a country which I had not seen before. I therefore entered a ship bound for Surat, having left a letter for my father declaring my intention.

CHAP. IX.

THE HISTORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.

“ **W**HEN I first entered upon the world of waters, and lost sight of land, I looked round about me with pleasing terror, and thinking my soul enlarged by the boundless prospect, imagined that I could gaze round for ever without satiety; but, in a short time, I grew weary of looking on barren uniformity, where I could only see again what I had already seen. I then descended into the ship, and doubted for a while whether all my future pleasures would not end like this, in disgust and disappointment. “ Yet, surely,” said I, “ the ocean and the land are very different; the only variety of water is rest and motion, but the earth has mountains and valleys, deserts and cities: it is inhabited by men of different customs and contrary opinions; and I may hope to find variety

“ in life, though I should miss it in nature.

“ With this thought I quieted my mind, and amused myself during the voyage, sometimes by learning from the sailors the art of navigation, which I have never practised, and sometimes by forming schemes for my conduct in different situations, in not one of which I have been ever placed.

“ I was almost weary of my naval amusements when we landed safely at Surat. I secured my money, and purchasing some commodities for show, joined myself to a caravan that was passing into the inland country. My companions, for some reason or other, conjecturing that I was rich, and, by my enquiries and admiration, finding that I was ignorant, considered me as a novice, whom they had a right to cheat, and who was to learn at the usual expence the art of fraud. They exposed me to the theft of servants, and the exaction of officers, and saw me plundered upon false pretences, without any advantage to themselves, but that of rejoicing in the superiority of their own knowledge.

“ Stop a moment,” said the prince. “ Is there such depravity in man, as that he should injure another without benefit to himself? I can easily conceive that all are pleased with superiority; but your ignorance was merely accidental, which being neither your crime nor your folly, could afford them no reason to applaud themselves; and the knowledge which they had, and which you wanted, they might as effectually have shewn by warning, as betraying you.”

“ Pride,” said Imlac, “ is seldom delicate, it will please itself with very mean advantages; and envy feels not it's own happiness, but when it may be compared with the misery of others. They were my enemies, because they grieved to think me rich; and my oppressors, because they delighted to find me weak.”

“ Proceed,” said the prince: “ I doubt not of the facts which you relate, but imagine that you impute them to mistaken motives.”

“ In this company,” said Imlac, “ I arrived at Agra, the capital of Indostan, the city in which the Great Mogul commonly

CHAP. X.

IMLAC'S HISTORY CONTINUED. A
DISSERTATION UPON POETRY.

commonly resides. I applied myself to the language of the country, and in a few months was able to converse with the learned men; some of whom I found morose and reserved, and others easy and communicative; some were unwilling to teach another what they had with difficulty learned themselves; and some shewed that the end of their studies was to gain the dignity of instructing.

To the tutor of the young princes I recommended myself so much, that I was presented to the emperor as a man of uncommon knowledge. The emperor asked me many questions concerning my country and my travels; and though I cannot now recollect any thing that he uttered above the power of a common man, he dismissed me astonished at his wisdom, and enamoured of his goodness.

My credit was now so high, that the merchants, with whom I had travelled, applied to me for recommendations to the ladies of the court. I was surprised at their confidence of solicitation, and gently reproached them with their practices on the road. They heard me with cold indifference, and shewed no tokens of shame or sorrow.

They then urged their request with the offer of a bribe; but what I would not do for kindness, I would not do for money; and refused them, not because they had injured me, but because I would not enable them to injure others; for I knew they would have made use of my credit to cheat those who should buy their wares.

Having resided at Agrâ till there was no more to be learned, I travelled into Persia, where I saw many remains of ancient magnificence, and observed many new accommodations of life. The Persians are a nation eminently social, and their assemblies afforded me daily opportunities of remarking characters and manners, and of tracing human nature through all its variations.

From Persia I passed into Arabia, where I saw a nation at once pastoral and warlike; who live without any settled habitation; whose only wealth is their flocks and herds; and who have yet carried on, through all ages, an hereditary war with all mankind, though they neither covet nor envy their possessions.

WHEREVER I went, I found that poetry was considered as the highest learning, and regarded with a veneration somewhat approaching to that which man would pay to the Angelick Nature. And yet it fills me with wonder, that, in almost all countries, the most ancient poets are considered as the best: whether it be that every other kind of knowledge is an acquisition gradually attained, and poetry is a gift conferred at once; or that the first poetry of every nation surprised them as a novelty, and retained the credit by consent which it received by accident at first: or whether, as the province of poetry is to describe Nature and Passion, which are always the same, the first writers took possession of the most striking objects for description, and the most probable occurrences for fiction, and left nothing to those that followed them, but transcription of the same events, and new combinations of the same images. Whatever be the reason, it is commonly observed that the early writers are in possession of nature, and their followers of art: that the first excel in strength and invention, and the latter in elegance and refinement.

I was desirous to add my name to this illustrious fraternity. I read all the poets of Persia and Arabia, and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the mosque of Mecca. But I soon found that no man was ever great by imitation. My desire of excellence impelled me to transfer my attention to nature and to life. Nature was to be my subject, and men to be my auditors: I could never describe what I had not seen: I could not hope to move those with delight or terror, whose interests and opinions I did not understand.

Being now resolved to be a poet, I saw every thing with a new purpose; my sphere of attention was suddenly magnified: no kind of knowledge was to be overlooked. I ranged mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and pictured upon my mind every tree of the forest and flower of the

the valley. I observed with equal care the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes I wandered along the mazes of the rivulet, and sometimes watched the changes of the summer clouds. To a poet nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination; he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety: for every idea is useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth; and he, who knows most, will have most power of diversifying his scenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote allusions and unexpected instruction.

All the appearances of nature I was therefore careful to study, and every country which I have surveyed has contributed something to my poetical powers.

In so wide a survey, said the prince, you must surely have left much unobserved. I have lived, till now, within the circuit of these mountains, and yet cannot walk abroad without the sight of something which I had never beheld before, or never heeded.

The business of a poet, said Imlac, is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances; he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features, as recall the original to every mind; and must neglect the minuter discriminations, which one may have remarked, and another have neglected, for those characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness.

But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life. His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition; observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various institutions and accidental in-

fluences of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondence of decrepitude. He must divest himself of the prejudices of his age or country; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same: he must therefore content himself with the slow progress of his name; condemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity. He must write as the interpreter of nature, and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations; as a being superior to time and place.

His labour is not yet at an end: he must know many languages and many sciences; and, that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, must, by incessant practice, familiarize to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony.

CHAP. XI.

IMLAC'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED. A HINT ON PILGRIMAGE.

IMLAC now felt the enthusiastick fit, and was proceeding to aggrandize his own profession, when the prince cried out, Enough! thou hast convinced me, that no human being can ever be a poet. Proceed with thy narration.

To be a poet, said Imlac, is indeed very difficult.—So difficult, returned the prince, that I will at present hear no more of his labours. Tell me whither you went when you had seen Persia.

From Persia, said the poet, I travelled through Syria, and for three years resided in Palestine, where I conversed with great numbers of the northern and western nations of Europe; the nations which are now in possession of all power and all knowledge; whose armies are irresistible, and whose fleets command the remotest parts of the globe. When I compared these men with the natives of our own kingdom and those that

surround us, they appeared almost another order of beings. In their countries it is difficult to wish for any thing that may not be obtained: a thousand arts, of which we never heard, are continually labouring for their convenience and pleasure; and whatever their own climate has denied them is supplied by their commerce.

By what means, said the prince, are the Europeans thus powerful, or why, since they can so easily visit Asia and Africa for trade or conquest, cannot the Asiatics and Africans invade their coasts, plant colonies in their ports, and give laws to their natural princes? The same wind that carries them back would bring us thither.

They are more powerful, Sir, than we, answered Imlac, because they are wiser; knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reason can be given, but the unsearchable will of the Supreme Being.

When, said the prince with a sigh, shall I be able to visit Palestine, and mingle with this mighty confluence of nations? Till that happy moment shall arrive, let me fill up the time with such representations as thou canst give me. I am not ignorant of the motive that assembles such numbers in that place, and cannot but consider it as the centre of wisdom and piety, to which the best and wisest men of every land must be continually resorting.

There are some nations, said Imlac, that send few visitants to Palestine; for many numerous and learned sects in Europe concur to censure pilgrimage as superstitions, or deride it as ridiculous.

You know, said the prince, how little my life has made me acquainted with diversity of opinions: it will be too long to hear the arguments on both sides; you, that have considered them, tell me the result.

Pilgrimage, said Imlac, like many other acts of piety, may be reasonable or superstitious, according to the principles upon which it is performed. Long journeys in search of truth are not commanded. Truth, such as is necessary to the regulation

of life, is always found where it is honestly sought. Change of place is no natural cause of the increase of piety, for it inevitably produces dissipation of mind. Yet, since men go every day to view the fields where great actions have been performed, and return with stronger impressions of the event, curiosity of the same kind may naturally dispose us to view that country whence our religion had its beginning; and I believe no man surveys those awful scenes without some confirmation of holy resolutions. That the Supreme Being may be more easily propitiated in one place than in another, is the dream of idle superstition; but that some places may operate upon our own minds in an uncommon manner, is an opinion which hourly experience will justify. He who supposes that his vices may be more successfully combated in Palestine, will, perhaps, find himself mistaken, yet he may go thither without folly: he who thinks they will be more freely pardoned, dishonours at once his reason and religion.

These, said the prince, are European distinctions. I will consider them another time. What have you found to be the effect of knowledge? Are those nations happier than we?

There is so much infelicity, said the poet, in the world, that scarce any man has leisure from his own distresses to estimate the comparative happiness of others. Knowledge is certainly one of the means of pleasure, as is confessed by the natural desire which every mind feels of increasing its ideas. Ignorance is mere privation, by which nothing can be produced: it is a vacuity in which the soul sits motionless and torpid for want of attraction; and, without knowing why, we always rejoice when we learn, and grieve when we forget. I am therefore inclined to conclude, that if nothing counteracts the natural consequence of learning, we grow more happy as our minds take a wider range.

In enumerating the particular comforts of life we shall find many advantages on the side of the Europeans. They cure wounds and diseases with which we languish and perish. We suffer inclemencies of weather which they

‘they can obviate. They have engines for the dispatch of many laborious works, which we must perform by manual industry. There is such communication between distant places, that one friend can hardly be said to be absent from another. Their policy removes all publick inconveniencies: they have roads cut through their mountains, and bridges laid upon their rivers. And, if we descend to the privacies of life, their habitations are more commodious, and their possessions are more secure.’

‘They are surely happy,’ said the prince, ‘who have all these conveniencies, of which I envy none so much as the facility with which separated friends interchange their thoughts.’

‘The Europeans,’ answered Imlac, ‘are less unhappy than we, but they are not happy. Human life is every where a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed.’

CHAP. XII.

THE STORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.

‘I Am not yet willing,’ said the prince, ‘to suppose that happiness is so parsimoniously distributed to mortals; nor can I believe but that, if I had the choice of life, I should be able to fill every day with pleasure. I would injure no man, and should provoke no resentment: I would relieve every distress, and should enjoy the benedictions of gratitude. I would chuse my friends among the wise, and my wife among the virtuous; and therefore should be in no danger from treachery or unkindness. My children should, by my care, be learned and pious, and would repay to my age what their childhood had received. What would dare to molest him who might call on every side to thousands enriched by his bounty, or assisted by his power? And why should not life glide quietly away in the soft reciprocation of protection and reverence? All this may be done without the help of European refinements, which appear by their effects to be rather specious than useful. Let us leave them, and pursue our journey.’

‘From Palestine,’ said Imlac, ‘I passed through many regions of Asia;

in the more civilized kingdoms as a trader, and among the Barbarians of the mountains as a pilgrim. At last I began to long for my native country, that I might repose, after my travels and fatigues, in the places where I had spent my earliest years, and gladden my old companions with the recital of my adventures. Often did I figure to myself those with whom I had sported away the gay hours of dawning life, sitting round me in its evening, wondering at my tales, and listening to my counsels.

‘When this thought had taken possession of my mind, I considered every moment as wasted which did not bring me nearer to Abissinia. I hastened into Egypt, and notwithstanding my impatience, was detained ten months in the contemplation of its ancient magnificence, and in enquiries after the remains of its ancient learning. I found in Cairo a mixture of all nations; some brought thither by the love of knowledge, some by the hope of gain, and many by the desire of living after their own manner without observation, and of lying hid in the obscurity of multitudes: for in a city, populous as Cairo, it is possible to obtain at the same time the gratifications of society, and the secrecy of solitude.

‘From Cairo I travelled to Suez, and embarked on the Red Sea, passing along the coast till I arrived at the port from which I had departed twenty years before. Here I joined myself to a caravan, and re-entered my native country.

‘I now expected the caresses of my kinsmen, and the congratulations of my friends, and was not without hope that my father, whatever value he had set upon riches, would own with gladness and pride a son who was able to add to the felicity and honour of the nation.’ But I was soon convinced that my thoughts were vain. My father had been dead fourteen years, having divided his wealth among my brothers, who were removed to some other provinces. Of my companions the greater part was in the grave; of the rest, some could with difficulty remember me, and some considered me as one corrupted by foreign manners.

‘A man used to vicissitudes is not easily

‘ easily dejected. I forgot, after a time, my disappointment, and endeavoured to recommend myself to the nobles of the kingdom; they admitted me to their tables, heard my story, and dismissed me. I opened a school, and was prohibited to teach. I then resolved to sit down in the quiet of domestick life, and addressed a lady that was fond of my conversation, but rejected my suit, because my father was a merchant.

‘ Wearied at last with solicitation and repulses, I resolved to hide myself forever from the world, and depend no longer on the opinion or caprice of others. I waited for the time when the gate of the *happy valley* should open, that I might bid farewell to hope and fear: the day came; my performance was distinguished with favour, and I resigned myself with joy to perpetual confinement.

‘ Hast thou here found happiness at last?’ said Rasselas. ‘ Tell me without reserve; art thou content with thy condition? or, dost thou wish to be again wandering and enquiring? All the inhabitants of this valley celebrate their lot, and at the annual visit of the emperor, invite others to partake of their felicity.’

‘ Great prince,’ said Imlac, ‘ I shall speak the truth; I know not one of all your attendants who does not lament the hour when he entered this retreat. I am less unhappy than the rest, because I have a mind replete with images, which I can vary and combine at pleasure. I can amuse my solitude by the renovation of the knowledge which begins to fade from my memory, and by recollection of the accidents of my past life. Yet all this ends in the sorrowful consideration, that my acquirements are now useless, and that none of my pleasures can be again enjoyed. The rest, whose minds have no impression but of the present moment, are either corroded by malignant passions, or sit stupid in the gloom of perpetual vacancy.

‘ What passions can infest those,’ said the prince, ‘ who have no rivals? We are in a place where impotence precludes malice, and where all envy is repressed by community of enjoyments.

‘ There may be community,’ said Imlac, ‘ of material possessions, but

‘ there can never be community of love or of esteem. It must happen that one will please more than another; he that knows himself despised will always be envious; and still more envious and malevolent, if he is condemned to live in the presence of those who despise him. The invitations, by which they allure others to a state which they feel to be wretched, proceed from the natural malignity of hopeless misery. They are weary of themselves, and of each other, and expect to find relief in new companions. They envy the liberty which their folly has forfeited, and would gladly see all mankind imprisoned like themselves.

‘ From this crime, however, I am wholly free. No man can say that he is wretched by my persuasion. I look with pity on the crowds who are annually soliciting admission to captivity, and wish that it were lawful for me to warn them of their danger.’

‘ My dear Imlac,’ said the prince, ‘ I will open to thee my whole heart. I have long meditated an escape from the happy valley. I have examined the mountains on every side, but find myself insuperably barred: teach me the way to break my prison; thou shalt be the companion of my flight, the guide of my rambles, the partner of my fortune, and my sole director in the choice of life.’

‘ Sir,’ answered the poet, ‘ your escape will be difficult, and, perhaps, you may soon repent your curiosity. The world, which you figure to yourself smooth and quiet as the lake in the valley, you will find a sea foaming with tempests, and boiling with whirlpools: you will be sometimes overwhelmed by the waves of violence, and sometimes dashed against the rocks of treachery. Amidst wrongs and frauds, competitions and anxieties, you will wish a thousand times for these seats of quiet, and willingly quit hope to be free from fear.’

‘ Do not seek to deter me from my purpose,’ said the prince: ‘ I am impatient to see what thou hast seen; and, since thou art thyself weary of the valley, it is evident, that thy former state was better than this. Whatever be the consequence of my experiment, I am resolved to judge with mine own eyes of the various conditions of men, and

then to make deliberately my *choice of life*."

"I am afraid," said Imlac, "you are hindered by stronger restraints than my persuasions; yet, if your determination is fixed, I do not counsel you to despair. Few things are impossible to diligence and skill."

CHAP. XIII.

RASSELAS DISCOVERS THE MEANS OF ESCAPE.

THE prince now dismissed his favourite to rest, but the narrative of wonders and novelties filled his mind with perturbation. He revolved all that he had heard, and prepared innumerable questions for the morning.

Much of his uneasiness was now removed. He had a friend to whom he could impart his thoughts, and whose experience could assist him in his designs. His heart was no longer condemned to swell with silent vexation. He thought that even the *happy valley* might be endured with such a companion, and that if they could range the world together, he should have nothing further to desire.

In a few days the water was discharged, and the ground dried. The prince and Imlac then walked out together to converse without the notice of the rest. The prince, whose thoughts were always on the wing, as he passed by the gate, said, with a countenance of sorrow, "Why art thou so strong, and why is man so weak?"

"Man is not weak," answered his companion; "knowledge is more than equivalent to force. The master of mechanics laughs at strength. I can burst the gate, but cannot do it secretly. Some other expedient must be tried."

As they were walking on the side of the mountain, they observed that the conies, which the rain had driven from their burrows, had taken shelter among the bushes, and formed holes behind them, tending upwards in an oblique line. "It has been the opinion of antiquity," said Imlac, "that human reason borrowed many arts from the instinct of animals; let us, therefore, not think ourselves degraded by learning from the coney. We may escape by

piercing the mountain in the same direction. We will begin where the summit hangs over the middle part, and labour upward till we shall issue up beyond the prominence."

The eyes of the prince, when he heard this proposal, sparkled with joy. The execution was easy, and the success certain.

No time was now lost. They hastened early in the morning to chuse a place proper for their mine. They clambered with great fatigue among crags and brambles, and returned without having discovered any part that favoured their design. The second and the third day were spent in the same manner and with the same frustration. But, on the fourth, they found a small cavern, concealed by a thicket, where they resolved to make their experiment.

Imlac procured instruments proper to hew stone and remove earth, and they fell to their work on the next day with more eagerness than vigour. They were presently exhausted by their efforts, and sat down to pant upon the grass. The prince, for a moment, appeared to be discouraged. "Sir," said his companion, "practice will enable us to continue our labour for a longer time; mark, however, how far we have advanced, and you will find that our toil will some time have an end. Great works are performed, not by strength, but perseverance; yonder palace was raised by single stones, yet you see it's height and spaciousness. He that shall walk with vigour three hours a day, will pass in seven years a space equal to the circumference of the globe."

They returned to their work day after day, and, in a short time, found a fissure in the rock, which enabled them to pass far with very little obstruction. This Rasselas considered as a good omen. "Do not disturb your mind," said Imlac, "with other hopes or fears than reason may suggest: if you are pleased with prognosticks of good, you will be terrified likewise with tokens of evil, and your whole life will be a prey to superstition. Whatever facilitates our work is more than an omen, it is a cause of success. This is one of those pleasing surprises which often happen to active resolution. Many things difficult to design prove easy to performance."

C H A P. XIV.

RASSELAS AND IMLAC RECEIVE AN
UNEXPECTED VISIT.

THEY had now wrought their way to the middle, and isolated their toil with the approach of liberty, when the prince, coming down to refresh himself with air, found his sister Nekayah standing before the mouth of the cavity. He started and stood confused, afraid to tell his design, and yet hopeless to conceal it. A few moments determined him to repose on her fidelity, and secure her secrecy by a declaration without reserve.

'Do not imagine,' said the princess, 'that I came hither as a spy: I had long observed from my window, that you and Imlac directed your walk every day towards the same point, but I did not suppose you had any better reason for the preference than a cooler shade, or more fragrant bank; nor followed you with any other design than to partake of your conversation. Since then not suspicion but fondness has detected you, let me not lose the advantage of my discovery. I am equally weary of confinement with yourself, and not less desirous of knowing what is done or suffered in the world. Permit me to fly with you from this tasteless tranquillity, which will yet grow more loathsome when you have left me. You may deny me to accompany you, but cannot hinder me from following.'

The prince, who loved Nekayah above his other sisters, had no inclination to refuse her request, and grieved that he had lost an opportunity of shewing his confidence by a voluntary communication. It was therefore agreed that she should leave the valley with them; and that, in the mean time, she should watch, lest any other straggler should, by chance or curiosity, follow them to the mountain.

At length their labour was at an end; they saw light beyond the prominence, and, issuing to the top of the mountain, beheld the Nile, yet a narrow current, wandering beneath them.

The prince looked round with rapture, anticipated all the pleasures of travel, and in thought was already transported beyond his father's dominions. Imlac, though very joyful at his escape, had less expectation of pleasure in the

world, which he had before tried, and of which he had been weary.

Rasselas was so much delighted with a wider horizon, that he could not soon be persuaded to return into the valley. He informed his sister that the way was open, and that nothing now remained but to prepare for their departure.

C H A P. XV.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS LEAVE
THE VALLEY, AND SEE MANY
WONDERS.

THE prince and princess had jewels sufficient to make them rich whenever they came into a place of commerce, which, by Imlac's direction, they hid in their clothes, and, on the night of the next full moon, all left the valley. The princess was followed only by a single favourite, who did not know whither she was going.

They clambered through the cavity, and began to go down on the other side. The princess and her maid turned their eyes towards every part, and, seeing nothing to bound their prospect, considered themselves as in danger of being lost in a dreary vacuity. They stopped and trembled. 'I am almost afraid,' said the princess, 'to begin a journey of which I cannot perceive an end, and to venture into this immense plain, where I may be approached on every side by men whom I never saw.' The prince felt nearly the same emotions, though he thought it more manly to conceal them.

Imlac smiled at their terrors, and encouraged them to proceed; but the princess continued irresolute till she had been imperceptibly drawn forward too far to return.

In the morning they found some shepherds in the field, who set milk and fruits before them. The princess wondered that she did not see a palace ready for her reception, and a table spread with delicacies; but, being faint and hungry, she drank the milk and eat the fruits, and thought them of a higher flavour than the products of the valley.

They travelled forward by easy journeys, being all unaccustomed to toil or difficulty, and knowing, that though they might be missed, they could not be pursued. In a few days they came into

into a more populous region, where Imlac was diverted with the admiration which his companions expressed at the diversity of manners, stations, and employments.

Their dress was such as might not bring upon them the suspicion of having any thing to conceal; yet the prince, wherever he came, expected to be obeyed, and the princess was frightened, because those that came into her presence did not prostrate themselves before her. Imlac was forced to observe them with great vigilance, lest they should betray their rank by their unusual behaviour, and detained them several weeks in the first village, to accustom them to the sight of common mortals.

By degrees the royal wanderers were taught to understand that they had for a time laid aside their dignity, and were to expect only such regard as liberality and courtesy could procure. And Imlac, having, by many admonitions, prepared them to endure the tumults of a port, and the ruggedness of the commercial race, brought them down to the sea-coast.

The prince and his sister, to whom every thing was new, were gratified equally at all places, and therefore remained for some months at the port without any inclination to pass further. Imlac was content with their stay, because he did not think it safe to expose them, unpractised in the world, to the hazards of a foreign country.

At last he began to fear lest they should be discovered, and proposed to fix a day for their departure. They had no pretensions to judge for themselves, and referred the whole scheme to his direction. He therefore took passage in a ship to Suez; and, when the time came, with great difficulty prevailed on the princess to enter the vessel. They had a quick and prosperous voyage, and from Suez travelled by land to Cairo.

C H A P. XVI.

THEY ENTER CAIRO, AND FIND EVERY MAN HAPPY.

AS they approached the city, which filled the strangers with astonishment, 'This,' said Imlac to the prince, 'is the place where travellers and mer-

chants assemble from all the corners of the earth. You will here find men of every character, and every occupation. Commerce is here honourable: I will act as a merchant, and you shall live as strangers, who have no other end of travel than curiosity; it will soon be observed that we are rich; our reputation will procure us access to all whom we shall desire to know; you will see all the conditions of humanity, and enable yourself at leisure to make your choice of life.'

They now entered the town, stunned by the noise, and offended by the crowds. Instruction had not yet so prevailed over habit, but that they wondered to see themselves pass undistinguished along the street, and met by the lowest of the people without reverence or notice. The princess could not at first bear the thought of being levelled with the vulgar, and, for some days, continued in her chamber, where she was served by her favourite Pekuah as in the palace of the valley.

Imlac, who understood traffick, sold part of the jewels the next day, and hired a house, which he adorned with such magnificence, that he was immediately considered as a merchant of great wealth. His politeness attracted many acquaintance, and his generosity made him courted by many dependants. His table was crowded by men of every nation, who all admired his knowledge, and solicited his favour. His companions, not being able to mix in the conversation, could make no discovery of their ignorance or surprise, and were gradually initiated in the world as they gained knowledge of the language.

The prince had, by frequent lectures, been taught the use and nature of money; but the ladies could not, for a long time, comprehend what the merchants did with small pieces of gold and silver, or why things of so little use should be received as equivalent to the necessaries of life.

They studied the language two years, while Imlac was preparing to set before them the various ranks and conditions of mankind. He grew acquainted with all who had any thing uncommon in their fortune or conduct. He frequented the voluptuous and the frugal, the idle and the busy, the merchants and the men of learning.

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The prince being now able to converse with fluency, and having learned the caution necessary to be observed in his intercourse with strangers, began to accompany Imlac to places of resort, and to enter into all assemblies, that he might make his *choice of life*.

For some time he thought choice needless, because all appeared to him equally happy. Wherever he went he met gaiety and kindness, and heard the song of joy or the laugh of carelessness. He began to believe that the world overflowed with universal plenty, and that nothing was withheld either from want or merit; that every hand showered liberality, and every heart melted with benevolence: 'and who then,' says he, 'will be suffered to be wretched?'

Imlac permitted the pleasing delusion, and was unwilling to crush the hope of inexperience, till one day, having sat a while silent, 'I know not,' said the prince, 'what can be the reason that I am more unhappy than any of our friends. I see them perpetually and unalterably cheerful, but feel my own mind restless and uneasy. I am unsatisfied with those pleasures which I seem most to court, I live in the crowds of jollity, not so much to enjoy company as to shun myself, and am only loud and merry to conceal my sadnesses.'

'Every man,' said Imlac, 'may, by examining his own mind, guess what passes in the minds of others: when you feel that your own gaiety is counterfeit, it may justly lead you to suspect that of your companions not to be sincere. Envy is commonly reciprocal. We are long before we are convinced that happiness is never to be found, and each believes it possessed by others, to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself. In the assembly, where you passed the last night, there appeared such sprightliness of air, and volatility of fancy, as might have suited beings of an higher order, formed to inhabit serener regions, inaccessible to care or sorrow: yet, believe me, prince, there was not one who did not dread the moment when solitude should deliver him to the tyranny of reflection.'

'This,' said the prince, 'may be true of others, since it is true of me; yet, whatever be the general infelicity of

man, one condition is more happy than another, and wisdom surely directs us to take the least evil in the *choice of life*.'

'The causes of good and evil,' answered Imlac, 'are so various and uncertain, so often entangled with each other, so diversified by various relations, and so much subject to accidents which cannot be foreseen, that he who would fix his condition upon incontestible reasons of preference, must live and die enquiring and deliberating.'

'But surely,' said Rasselas, 'the wise men, to whom we listen with reverence and wonder, chose that mode of life for themselves which they thought most likely to make them happy.'

'Very few,' said the poet, 'live by choice. Every man is placed in his present condition by causes which acted without his foresight, and with which he did not always willingly co-operate; and therefore you will rarely meet one who does not think the lot of his neighbour better than his own.'

'I am pleased to think,' said the prince, 'that my birth has given me at least one advantage over others, by enabling me to determine for myself. I have here the world before me; I will review it at leisure: surely happiness is somewhere to be found.'

CHAP. XVII.

THE PRINCE ASSOCIATES WITH YOUNG MEN OF SPIRIT AND GAIETY.

RASSELAS rose next day, and resolved to begin his experiments upon life. 'Youth,' cried he, 'is the time of gladness: I will join myself to the young men, whose only business is to gratify their desires, and whose time is all spent in a succession of enjoyments.'

To such societies he was readily admitted, but a few days brought him back weary and disgusted. Their mirth was without images; their laughter without motive; their pleasures were gross and sensual, in which the mind had no part; their conduct was at once wild and mean; they laughed at order and at law, but

but the frown of power dejected, and the eye of wisdom abashed them.

The prince soon concluded, that he should never be happy in a course of life of which he was ashamed. He thought it unsuitable to a reasonable being to act without a plan, and to be sad or cheerful only by chance. 'Happiness,' said he, 'must be something solid and permanent, without fear and without uncertainty.'

But his young companions had gained so much of his regard by their frankness and courtesy, that he could not leave them without warning and remonstrance. 'My friends,' said he, 'I have seriously considered our manners and our prospects, and find that we have mistaken our own interest. The first years of man must make provision for the last. He that never thinks never can be wise. Perpetual levity must end in ignorance; and intemperance, though it may fire the spirits for an hour, will make life short or miserable. Let us consider that youth is of no long duration, and that in maturer age, when the enchantments of fancy shall cease, and phantoms of delight dance no more about us, we shall have no comforts but the esteem of wise men, and the means of doing good. Let us, therefore, stop, while to stop is in our power: let us live as men who are some time to grow old, and to whom it will be the most dreadful of all evils not to count their past years by follies, and to be reminded of their former luxuriance of health only by the maladies which riot has produced.'

They stared a while in silence one upon another, and at last drove him away by a general chorus of continued laughter.

The consciousness that his sentiments were just, and his intentions kind, was scarcely sufficient to support him against the horror of derision. But he recovered his tranquillity, and pursued his search.

C H A P. XVIII.

THE PRINCE FINDS A WISE AND HAPPY MAN.

AS he was one day walking in the street, he saw a spacious building which all were, by the open doors, invited to enter: he followed the stream

of people, and found it a hall or school of declamation, in which professors read lectures to their auditory. He fixed his eye upon a sage raised above the rest, who discoursed with great energy on the government of the passions. His look was venerable, his action graceful, his pronunciation clear, and his diction elegant. He shewed, with great strength of sentiment, and variety of illustration, that human nature is degraded and debased, when the lower faculties predominate over the higher; that when fancy, the parent of passion, usurps the dominion of the mind, nothing ensues but the natural effect of unlawful government, perturbation and confusion; that she betrays the fortresses of the intellect to rebels, and excites her children to sedition against reason their lawful sovereign. He compared reason to the sun, of which the light is constant, uniform, and lasting; and fancy to a meteor, of bright but transitory lustre, irregular in it's motion, and delusive in it's direction.

He then communicated the various precepts given from time to time for the conquest of passion, and displayed the happiness of those who had obtained the important victory, after which man is no longer the slave of fear, nor the fool of hope; is no more emaciated by envy, inflamed by anger, emasculated by tenderness, or depressed by grief; but walks on calmly through the tumults or privacies of life, as the sun pursues alike his course through the calm or the stormy sky.

He enumerated many examples of heroes immovable by pain or pleasure, who looked with indifference on those modes or accidents to which the vulgar give the names of good and evil. He exhorted his hearers to lay aside their prejudices, and arm themselves against the shafts of malice or misfortune, by invulnerable patience; concluding, that this state only was happiness, and that this happiness was in every one's power.

Rasselas listened to him with the veneration due to the instructions of a superiour being, and, waiting for him at the door, humbly implored the liberty of visiting so great a master of true wisdom. The lecturer hesitated a moment, when Rasselas put a purse of gold into his hand, which he received with a mixture of joy and wonder.

'I have found,' said the prince, at his return

CHAP. XIX.

A GLIMPSE OF PASTORAL LIFE.

return to Imlac, 'a man who can teach all that is necessary to be known, who, from the unshaken throne of rational fortitude, looks down on the scenes of life changing beneath him. He speaks, and attention watches his lips. He reasons; and conviction closes his periods. This man shall be my future guide: I will learn his doctrines, and imitate his life.'

'Be not too hasty,' said Imlac, 'to trust, or to admire, the teachers of morality: they discourse like angels, but they live like men.'

Rasselas, who could not conceive how any man could reason so forcibly without feeling the cogency of his own arguments, paid his visit in a few days, and was denied admission. He had now learned the power of money, and made his way by a piece of gold to the inner apartment, where he found the philosopher in a room half-darkened, with his eyes misty, and his face pale. 'Sir,' said he, 'you are come at a time when all human friendship is useless; what I suffer cannot be remedied, what I have lost cannot be supplied. My daughter, my only daughter, from whose tenderness I expected all the comforts of my age, died last night of a fever. My views, my purposes, my hopes, are at an end; I am now a lonely being disunited from society.'

'Sir,' said the prince, 'mortality is an event by which a wise man can never be surprised; we know that death is always near, and it should therefore always be expected.'—'Young man,' answered the philosopher, 'you speak like one that has never felt the pangs of separation.'—'Have you then forgot the precepts,' said Rasselas, 'which you so powerfully enforced? Has wisdom not strength to arm the heart against calamity? Consider, that external things are naturally variable, but truth and reason are always the same.'—'What comfort,' said the mourner, 'can truth and reason afford me? of what effect are they now, but to tell me, that my daughter will not be restored?'

The prince, whose humanity would not suffer him to insult misery with reproach, went away convinced of the emptiness of rhetorical sound, and the inefficiency of polished periods and studied sentences.

HE was still eager upon the same enquiry; and having heard of a hermit, that lived near the lowest cataract of the Nile, and filled the whole country with the fame of his sanctity, resolved to visit his retreat, and enquire whether that felicity, which publick life could not afford, was to be found in solitude; and whether a man, whose age and virtue made him venerable, could teach any peculiar art of shunning evils, or enduring them?

Imlac and the princess agreed to accompany him, and, after the necessary preparations, they began their journey. Their way lay through the fields, where shepherds tended their flocks; and the lambs were playing upon the pasture. 'This,' said the poet, 'is the life which has been often celebrated for its innocence and quiet; let us pass the heat of the day among the shepherds tents, and know whether all our searches are not to terminate in pastoral simplicity.'

The proposal pleased them, and they induced the shepherds, by small presents and familiar questions, to tell their opinion of their own state: they were so rude and ignorant, so little able to compare the good with the evil of the occupation, and so indistinct in their narratives and descriptions, that very little could be learned from them. But it was evident that their hearts were cankered with discontent; that they considered themselves as condemned to labour for the luxury of the rich, and looked up with stupid malevolence toward those that were placed above them.

The princess pronounced with vehemence, that she would never suffer these envious savages to be her companions, and that she should not soon be desirous of seeing any more specimens of rustick happiness; but could not believe that all the accounts of primeval pleasures were fabulous, and was yet in doubt, whether life had any thing that could be justly preferred to the placid gratifications of fields and woods. She hoped that the time would come, when, with a few virtuous and elegant companions, she should gather flowers planted by her own hand,

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fondle the lambs of her own ewe, and listen, without care, among brooks and breezes, to one of her maidens reading in the shade.

CHAP. XX.

THE DANGER OF PROSPERITY.

ON the next day they continued their journey, till the heat compelled them to look round for shelter. At a small distance they saw a thick wood, which they no sooner entered than they perceived that they were approaching the habitations of men. The shrubs were diligently cut away to open walks where the shades were darkest; the boughs of opposite trees were artificially interwoven; seats of flowery turf were raised in vacant spaces; and a rivulet, that wanted along the side of a winding path, had its banks sometimes opened into small basins, and its stream sometimes obstructed by little mounds of stone heaped together to increase its murmurs.

They passed slowly through the wood, delighted with such unexpected accommodations, and entertained each other with conjecturing what, or who, he could be, that, in those rude and unfrequented regions, had leisure and art for such harmless luxury.

As they advanced they heard the sound of musick, and saw youths and virgins dancing in the grove; and, going still further, beheld a stately palace built upon a hill surrounded with woods. The laws of eastern hospitality allowed them to enter, and the master welcomed them like a man liberal and wealthy.

He was skilful enough in appearances soon to discern that they were no common guests, and spread his table with magnificence. The eloquence of Imlac caught his attention, and the lofty courtesy of the princess excited his respect. When they offered to depart he entreated their stay, and was the next day still more unwilling to dismiss them than before. They were easily persuaded to stop, and civility grew up in time to freedom and confidence.

The prince now saw all the domesticks cheerful, and all the face of nature smiling round the place, and could not forbear to hope, that he should find here what he was seeking; but when he was

congratulating the master upon his possessions, he answered with a sigh, 'My condition has indeed the appearance of happiness, but appearances are delusive. My prosperity puts my life in danger; the Bassa of Egypt is my enemy, incensed only by my wealth and popularity. I have been hitherto protected against him by the princes of the country; but, as the favour of the great is uncertain, I know not how soon my defenders may be persuaded to share the plunder with the Bassa. I have sent my treasures into a distant country, and, upon the first alarm, am prepared to follow them. Then will my enemies riot in my mansion, and enjoy the gardens which I have planted.'

They all joined in lamenting his danger, and deprecating his exile: and the princess was so much disturbed with the tumult of grief and indignation, that she retired to her apartment. They continued with their kind inviter a few days longer, and then went forward to find the hermit.

CHAP. XXI.

THE HAPPINESS OF SOLITUDE. THE HERMIT'S HISTORY.

THEY came on the third day, by the direction of the peasants, to the hermit's cell: it was a cavern in the side of a mountain, over-shadowed with palm-trees; at such a distance from the cataract, that nothing more was heard than a gentle uniform murmur, such as composed the mind to pensive meditation, especially when it was assuaged by the wind whistling among the branches. The first rude essay of nature had been so much improved by human labour, that the cave contained several apartments appropriated to different uses, and often afforded lodging to travellers, whom darkness or tempests happened to overtake.

The hermit sat on a bench at the door, to enjoy the coolness of the evening. On one side lay a book with pens and papers, on the other mechanical instruments of various kinds. As they approached him unregarded, the princess observed that he had not the countenance of a man that had found, or could teach the way to happiness.

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They saluted him with great respect, which he repaid like a man not accustomed to the forms of courts. 'My children,' said he, 'if you have lost your way, you shall be willingly supplied with such conveniences for the night as this cavern will afford. I have all that nature requires, and you will not expect delicacies in a hermit's cell.'

They thanked him, and, entering, were pleased with the neatness and regularity of the place. The hermit set flesh and wine before them, though he fed only upon fruits and water. His discourse was cheerful without levity, and pious without enthusiasm. He soon gained the esteem of his guests, and the princess repented of her hasty censure.

At last Imlac began thus: 'I do not now wonder that your reputation is so far extended; we have heard at Cairo of your wisdom, and came hither to implore your direction for this young man and maiden in the choice of life.'

'To him that lives well,' answered the hermit, 'every form of life is good; nor can I give any other rule for choice, than to remove from all apparent evil.'

'He will remove most certainly from evil,' said the prince, 'who shall devote himself to that solitude which you have recommended by your example.'

'I have indeed lived fifteen years in solitude,' said the hermit, 'but have no desire that my example should gain any imitators. In my youth I professed arms, and was raised by degrees to the highest military rank. I have traversed wide countries at the head of my troops, and seen many battles and sieges. At last, being disgusted by the preferments of a younger officer, and feeling that my vigour was beginning to decay, I resolved to close my life in peace, having found the world full of inares, discord, and misery. I had once escaped from the pursuit of the enemy by the shelter of this cavern, and therefore chose it for my final residence. I employed artificers to form it into chambers, and stored it with all that I was likely to want.'

'For some time after my retreat, I rejoiced like a tempest-beaten sailor at his entrance into the harbour, being delighted with the sudden change of

the noise and hurry of war to stillness and repose. When the pleasure of novelty went away, I employed my hours in examining the plants which grow in the valley, and the minerals which I collected from the rocks. But that enquiry is now grown tasteless and irksome. I have been for some time unsettled and distracted: my mind is disturbed with a thousand perplexities of doubt, and vanities of imagination, which hourly prevail upon me, because I have no opportunities of relaxation or diversion. I am sometimes ashamed to think that I could not secure myself from vice, but by retiring from the exercise of virtue, and begin to suspect that I was rather impelled by resentment, than led by devotion, into solitude. My fancy riots in scenes of folly, and I lament that I have lost so much, and have gained so little. In solitude, if I escape the example of bad men, I want likewise the counsel and conversation of the good. I have been long comparing the evils with the advantages of society, and resolve to return into the world to-morrow. The life of a solitary man will be certainly miserable, but not certainly devout.'

They heard his resolution with surprise, but after a short pause, offered to conduct him to Cairo. He dug up a considerable treasure which he had hid among the rocks, and accompanied them to the city, on which, as he approached it, he gazed with rapture.

CHAP. XXII.

THE HAPPINESS OF A LIFE LED ACCORDING TO NATURE.

RASSELAS went often to an assembly of learned men, who met at stated times to unbend their minds, and compare their opinions. Their manners were somewhat coarse, but their conversation was instructive, and their disputations acute, though sometimes too violent, and often continued till neither contravertist remembered upon what question they began. Some faults were almost general among them: every one was desirous to dictate to the rest, and every one was pleased to hear the genius or knowledge of another depreciated.

In this assembly Rasselas was relating his interview with the hermit, and the wonder with which he heard him censure a course of life which he had so deliberately chosen, and so laudably followed. The sentiments of the hearers were various. Some were of opinion; that the folly of his choice had been justly punished by condemnation to perpetual perseverance. One of the youngest among them, with great vehemence; pronounced him an hypocrite. Some talked of the right of society to the labour of individuals, and considered retirement as a desertion of duty. Others readily allowed that there was a time when the claims of the publick were satisfied; and when a man might properly sequester himself, to review his life, and purify his heart.

One, who appeared more affected with the narrative than the rest, thought it likely, that the hermit would, in a few years, go back to his retreat, and; perhaps, if shame did not restrain, or death intercept him, return once more from his retreat into the world: 'For the hope of happiness,' said he 'is so strongly impressed, that the longest experience is not able to efface it. Of the present state, whatever it be, we feel, and are forced to confess, the misery; yet, when the same state is again at a distance, imagination paints it as desirable. But the time will surely come, when desire will be no longer our torment, and no man shall be wretched but by his own fault.'

'This,' said a philosopher, who had heard him with tokens of great impatience, 'is the present condition of a wise man. The time is already come, when none are wretched but by their own fault. Nothing is more idle, than to enquire after happiness, which nature has kindly placed within our reach. The way to be happy is to live according to nature, in obedience to that universal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impressed; which is not written on it by precept; but engraven by destiny, not instilled by education, but infused at our nativity. He that lives according to nature will suffer nothing from the delusions of hope, or importunities of desire: he will receive and reject with equability of temper; and act or suffer as the reason of things shall alternately prescribe. Other men

may amuse themselves with subtle distinctions, or intricate ratiocinations. Let them learn to be wise by easier means: let them observe the hind of the forest, and the sinnet of the grove; let them consider the life of animals, whose motions are regulated by instinct; they obey their guide and are happy. Let us therefore, at length, cease to dispute, and learn to live; throw away the incumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with so much pride and pomp do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim—"That deviation from nature is deviation from happiness."

When he had spoken, he looked round him with a placid air, and enjoyed the consciousness of his own beneficence. 'Sir,' said the prince, with great modesty, 'as I, like all the rest of mankind, am desirous of felicity, my closest attention has been fixed upon your discourse: I doubt not the truth of a position which a man so learned has so confidently advanced. Let me only know what it is to live according to nature.'

'When I find young men so humble and so docile,' said the philosopher, 'I can deny them no information which my studies have enabled me to afford. To live according to nature, is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects; to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity; to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things.'

The prince soon found that this was one of the sages whom he should understand less as he heard him longer. He therefore showed and was silent; and the philosopher, supposing him satisfied, and the rest vanquished, rose up and departed with the air of a man that had cooperated with the present system.

C H A P. XXIII.

THE PRINCE AND HIS SISTER DIVIDE BETWEEN THEM THE WORK OF OBSERVATION.

RASSELAS returned home full of reflections, doubtful how to direct his future steps. Of the way to happiness

he found the learned and simple equally ignorant; but, as he was yet young, he flattered himself that he had time remaining for more experiments, and further enquiries. He communicated to Imlac his observations and his doubts, but was answered by him with new doubts, and remarks that gave him no comfort. He therefore discoursed more frequently and freely with his sister, who had yet the same hope with himself, and always assisted him to give some reason why, though he had been hitherto frustrated, he might succeed at last.

'We have hitherto,' said she, 'known but little of the world: we have never yet been either great or mean. In our own country, though we had royalty, we had no power, and in this we have not yet seen the private recesses of domestic peace. Imlac favours not our search, lest we should in time find him mistaken. We will divide the task between us: you shall try what is to be found in the splendour of courts, and I will range the shades of humbler life. Perhaps command and authority may be the supreme blessings, as they afford most opportunities of doing good: or, perhaps, what this world can give may be found in the modest habitations of middle fortune; too low for great designs, and too high for penury and distress.'

C H A P. XXIV.

THE PRINCE EXAMINES THE HAPPINESS OF HIGH STATIONS.

RASSELAS applauded the design, and appeared next day with a splendid retinue at the court of the Bassa. He was soon distinguished for his magnificence, and admitted, as a prince whose curiosity had brought him from distant countries, to an intimacy with the great officers, and frequent conversation with the Bassa himself.

He was at first inclined to believe, that

the man must be pleased with his own condition, whom all approached with reverence, and heard with obedience, and who had the power to extend his edicts to a whole kingdom. 'There can be no pleasure,' said he, 'equal to that of feeling at once the joy of thousands all made happy by wise administration. Yet, since, by the law of subordination, this sublime delight can be in one nation but the lot of one, it is surely reasonable to think, that there is some satisfaction more popular and accessible, and that millions can hardly be subjected to the will of a single man, only to fill his particular breast with incommunicable content.'

These thoughts were often in his mind, and he found no solution of the difficulty. But as presents and civilities gained him more familiarity, he found that almost every man who stood high in employment hated all the rest, and was hated by them, and that their lives were a continual succession of plots and detections, stratagems and escapes, faction and treachery. Many of those who surrounded the Bassa, were sent only to watch and report his conduct; every tongue was muttering censure, and every eye was searching for a fault.

At last the letters of revocation arrived, the Bassa was carried in chains to Constantinople, and his name was mentioned no more.

'What are we now to think of the prerogatives of power,' said Rasselas to his sister; 'is it without any efficacy to good? or, is the subordinate degree only dangerous, and the supreme safe and glorious? Is the Sultan the only happy man in his dominions? or, is the Sultan himself subject to the tortments of suspicion, and the dread of enemies?'

In a short time the second Bassa was deposed. The Sultan, that had advanced him, was murdered by the Janisaries, and his successor had other views and different favourites.

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THE
HISTORY
OF

RASSELAS,

PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

CHAP. XXV.

THE PRINCESS PURSUES HER EN-
QUIRY WITH MORE DILIGENCE
THAN SUCCESS.



THE princess, in the mean time, insinuated herself into many families, for there are few doors through which liberality, joined with good humour, cannot find its way. The daughters of many houses were airy and cheerful, but Nekayah had been too long accustomed to the conversation of Imlac and her brother to be much pleased with childish levity and prattle which had no meaning. She found their thoughts narrow, their wishes low, and their merriment often artificial. Their pleasures, poor as they were, could not be preserved pure, but were embittered by petty competitions and worthless emulation. They were always jealous of the beauty of each other; of a quality to which sollicitude can add nothing, and from which detraction can take nothing away. Many were in love with triflers like themselves, and many fancied that they were in love when in

truth they were only idle. Their affection was fixed on sense or virtue, and therefore seldom ended but in vexation. Their grief, however, like their joy, was transient; every thing floated in their mind unconnected with the past or future, so that one desire easily gave way to another, as a second stone cast into the water effaces and confounds the circles of the first.

With these girls she played as with inoffensive animals, and found them proud of her countenance, and weary of her company.

But her purpose was to examine more deeply, and her affability easily persuaded the hearts that were swelling with sorrow to discharge their secrets in her ear: and those whom hope flattered, or prosperity delighted, often courted her to partake their pleasures.

The princess and her brother commonly met in the evening in a private summer-house on the bank of the Nile, and related to each other the occurrences of the day. As they were sitting together, the princess cast her eyes upon the river that flowed before her. 'Answer,' said she, 'great father of waters, thou that rollest thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocations of the

the daughter of thy native king. Tell me if thou wastest, through all thy course, a single habitation from which thou dost not hear the murmurs of complaint?

'You are then,' said Rasselas, 'not more successful in private houses than I have been in courts.'—'I have, since the last partition of our provinces,' said the princess, 'enabled myself to enter familiarly into many families, where there was the fairest shew of prosperity and peace, and know not one house that is not haunted by some fury that destroys their quiet.'

'I did not seek ease among the poor, because I concluded that there it could not be found. But I saw many poor, whom I had supposed to live in affliction. Poverty has, in large cities, very different appearances: it is often concealed in splendour, and often in extravagance. It is the care of a very great part of mankind to conceal their indigence from the rest: they support themselves by temporary expedients, and every day is lost in contriving for the morrow.'

'This, however, was an evil, which, though frequent, I saw with less pain, because I could relieve it. Yet some have refused my bounties; more offended with my quickness to detect their wants, than pleased with my readiness to succour them: and others, whose exigencies compelled them to admit my kindness, have never been able to forgive their benefactress. Many, however, have been sincerely grateful, without the ostentation of gratitude, or the hope of other favours.'

CHAP. XXVI.

THE PRINCESS CONTINUES HER REMARKS UPON PRIVATE LIFE.

NEKAYAH perceiving her brother's attention fixed, proceeded in her narrative.

'In families, where there is or is not poverty, there is commonly discord: if a kingdom be, as Imlac tells us, a great family, a family likewise is a little kingdom, torn with factions, and exposed to revolutions. An unpractised observer expects the love of parents and children to be constant and

equal; but this kindness seldom continues beyond the years of infancy: in a short time the children become rivals to their parents. Benefits are allayed by reproaches, and gratitude debated by envy.'

'Parents and children seldom act in concert: each child endeavours to appropriate the esteem or fondness of the parents, and the parents, with yet less temptation, betray each other to their children; thus some place their confidence in the father, and some in the mother, and by degrees, the house is filled with artifices and feuds.'

'The opinions of children and parents, of the young and the old, are naturally opposite, by the contrary effects of hope and despondence, of expectation and experience, without crime or folly on either side. The colours of life in youth and age appear different, as the face of nature in spring and winter. And how can children credit the assertions of parents, which their own eyes show them to be false?'

'Few parents act in such a manner as much to enforce their maxims by the credit of their lives. The old man trusts wholly to slow contrivance and gradual progression: the youth expects to force his way by genius, vigour, and precipitance. The old man pays regard to riches, and the youth reverences virtue. The old man deifies prudence: the youth commits himself to magnanimity and chance. The young man, who intends no ill, believes that none is intended, and therefore acts with openness and candour: but his father, having suffered the injuries of fraud, is impelled to suspect, and too often allured to practise it. Age looks with anger on the temerity of youth, and youth with contempt on the scrupulosity of age. Thus parents and children, for the greatest part, live on to love less and less: and, if those whom nature has thus closely united are the torments of each other, where shall we look for tenderness and consolation?'

'Surely,' said the prince, 'you must have been unfortunate in your choice of acquaintance: I am unwilling to believe, that the most tender of all relations is thus impeded in its effects by natural necessity.'

'Domestick discord,' answered she,

is not inevitably and fatally necessary: but yet it is not easily avoided. We seldom see that a whole family is virtuous: the good and evil cannot well agree; and the evil can yet less agree with one another: even the virtuous fall sometimes to variance, when their virtues are of different kinds, and tending to extremes. In general, those parents have most reverence who most deserve it: for he that lives well cannot be despised.

Many other evils infest private life. Some are the slaves of servants whom they have trusted with their affairs. Some are kept in continual anxiety to the caprice of rich relations, whom they cannot please, and dare not offend. Some husbands are imperious, and some wives perverse: and, as it is always more easy to do evil than good, though the wisdom or virtue of one can very rarely make many happy, the folly or vice of one may often make many miserable.

If such be the general effect of marriage, said the prince, I shall, for the future, think it dangerous to connect my interest with that of another, lest I should be unhappy by my partner's fault.

I have met, said the princess, with many who live single for that reason; but I never found that their prudence ought to raise envy. They dream away their time without friendship, without fondness, and are driven to rid themselves of the day, for which they have no use, by childish amusements, or vicious delights. They act as beings under the constant sense of some known inferiority, that fills their minds with rancour, and their tongues with censure. They are peevish at home, and malevolent abroad; and, as the outlaws of human nature, make it their business and their pleasure to disturb that society which debars them from its privileges. To live without feeling or exciting sympathy, to be fortunate without adding to the felicity of others, or afflicted without tasting the balm of pity, is a state more gloomy than solitude: it is not retreat, but exclusion from mankind. Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures.

What then is to be done? said Rasselas; the more we enquire, the less we can resolve. Surely he is most

likely to please himself that has no other inclination to regard.

C H A P. XXVII.

DISQUISITION UPON GREATNESS.

THE conversation had a short pause.

The prince, having considered his sister's observations, told her, that she had surveyed life with prejudice, and supposed misery where she did not find it. Your narrative, says he, throws yet a darker gloom upon the prospects of futurity: the predictions of Imlac were but faint sketches of the evils painted by Nekayah. I have been lately convinced that quiet is not the daughter of grandeur, or of power: that her presence is not to be bought by wealth, nor enforced by conquest. It is evident, that as any man acts in a wider compass, he must be more exposed to opposition from enmity or miscarriage from chance; whoever has many to please or to govern, must use the ministry of many agents, some of whom will be wicked, and some ignorant; by some he will be misled, and by others betrayed. If he gratifies one he will offend another: those that are not favoured will think themselves injured; and, since favours can be conferred but upon few, the greater number will be always discontented.

The discontent, said the princess, which is thus unreasonable, I hope that I shall always have spirit to despise, and, you power to repress.

Discontent, answered Rasselas, will not always be without reason under the most just and vigilant administration of publick affairs. None, however attentive, can always discover that merit which indigence or faction may happen to obscure; and none, however powerful, can always reward it. Yet, he that sees inferiour desert advanced above him, will naturally impute that preference to partiality or caprice; and, indeed, it can scarcely be hoped that any man, however magnanimous by nature, or exalted by condition, will be able to persist for ever in the fixed and inexorable justice of distribution: he will sometimes indulge his own affections, and sometimes those of his favourites; he will permit some to please him who can never serve him; he will discover in those whom he loves, quali-

'ties which in reality they do not possess; and to those, from whom he receives pleasure, he will in his turn endeavour to give it. Thus will recommendations sometimes prevail which were purchased by money, or by the more destructive bribery of flattery and servility.

'He that has much to do will do something wrong, and of that wrong must suffer the consequences; and, if it were possible that he should always act rightly, yet when such numbers are to judge of his conduct, the bad will censure and obstruct him by malevolence, and the good sometimes by mistake.

'The highest stations cannot therefore hope to be the abodes of happiness, which I would willingly believe to have fled from thrones and palaces to seats of humble privacy and placid obscurity. For what can hinder the satisfaction, or intercept the expectations, of him whose abilities are adequate to his employments, who sees with his own eyes the whole circuit of his influence, who chooses by his own knowledge all whom he trusts, and whom none are tempted to deceive by hope or fear? Surely he has nothing to do but to love and to be loved, to be virtuous and to be happy.'

'Whether perfect happiness would be procured by perfect goodness,' said Nekayah, 'this world will never afford an opportunity of deciding. But this, at least, may be maintained, that we do not always find visible happiness in proportion to visible virtue. All natural, and almost all political evils, are incident alike to the bad and good: they are confounded in the misery of a famine, and not much distinguished in the fury of a faction; they link together in a tempest, and are driven together from their country by invaders. All that virtue can afford is quietness of conscience, a steady prospect of a happier state; this may enable us to endure calamity with patience; but remember that patience must suppose pain.'

C H A P. XXVIII.

RASSELAS AND NEKAYAH CONTINUE
THEIR CONVERSATION.

'DEAR princess,' said Rasselas, 'you fall into the common errors of exaggeratory declamation, by

'producing, in a familiar disquisition, examples of national calamities, and scenes of extensive misery, which are found in books rather than in the world, and which, as they are horrid, are ordained to be rare. Let us not imagine evils which we do not feel, nor injure life by misrepresentations. I cannot bear that querulous eloquence which threatens every city with a siege like that of Jerusalem, that makes famine attend on every flight of locusts, and suspends pestilence on the wing of every blast that issues from the south.

'On necessary and inevitable evils, which overwhelm kingdoms at once, all disputation is vain: when they happen they must be endured. But it is evident, that these bursts of universal distress are more dreaded than felt; thousands and ten thousands flourish in youth, and wither in age, without the knowledge of any other than domestic evils, and share the same pleasures and vexations, whether their kings are mild or cruel, whether the armies of their country pursue their enemies, or retreat before them. While courts are disturbed with intestine competitions, and ambassadors are negotiating in foreign countries, the smith still plies his anvil, and the husbandman drives his plow forward; the necessities of life are required and obtained; and the successive business of the seasons continues to make it's wonted revolutions.

'Let us cease to consider what, perhaps, may never happen, and what, when it shall happen, will laugh at human speculation. We will not endeavour to modify the motions of the elements, or to fix the destiny of kingdoms. It is our business to consider what beings like us may perform; each labouring for his own happiness, by promoting within his circle, however narrow, the happiness of others.

'Marriage is evidently the dictate of nature; men and women are made to be companions of each other, and therefore I cannot be persuaded but that marriage is one of the means of happiness.'

'I know not,' said the princess, 'whether marriage be more than one of the innumerable modes of human misery. When I see and reckon the various forms of connubial infelicity, the unexpected causes of lasting discord,

cord, the diversities of temper, the oppositions of opinion, the rude collisions of contrary desire, where both are urged by violent impulses, the obstinate contests of disagreeable virtues, where both are supported by consciousness of good intention, I am sometimes disposed to think with the severer casuists of most nations, that marriage is rather permitted than approved, and that none, but by the instigation of a passion too much indulged, entangle themselves with indissoluble compacts.

'You seem to forget,' replied Rasselas, 'that you have, even now, represented celibacy as less happy than marriage. Both conditions may be bad, but they cannot both be worst. Thus it happens, when wrong opinions are entertained, that they mutually destroy each other, and leave the mind open to truth.'

'I did not expect,' answered the prince, 'to hear that imputed to falsehood which is the consequence only of frailty. To the mind, as to the eye, it is difficult to compare with exactness objects vast in their extent, and various in their parts. Where we see or conceive the whole at once, we readily note the discriminations, and decide the preference: but of two systems, of which neither can be surveyed by any human being in its full compass of magnitude and multiplicity of complication, where is the wonder, that judging of the whole by parts, I am alternately affected by one and the other as either presses on my memory or fancy? We differ from ourselves just as we differ from each other, when we see only part of the question, as in the multifarious relations of politics and morality; but when we perceive the whole at once, as in numerical computations, all agree in one judgment, and none ever varies his opinion.'

'Let us not add,' said the prince, 'to the other evils of life, the bitterness of controversy, nor endeavour to vie with each other in subtilties of argument. We are employed in a search, of which both are equally to enjoy the success, or suffer by the miscarriage. It is therefore fit that we assist each other. You surely conclude too hastily from the infelicity of marriage against its institution: will not the misery of life prove equally that life cannot be the gift of Heaven? The world must

'be peopled by marriage, or peopled without it.'

'How the world is to be peopled,' returned Nekayah, 'is not my care, and needs not be yours. I see no danger that the present generation should omit to leave successors behind them: we are not now inquiring for the world, but for ourselves.'

CHAP. XXIX.

THE DEBATE OF MARRIAGE CONTINUED.

'THE good of the whole,' says Rasselas, 'is the same with the good of all its parts. If marriage be best for mankind, it must be evidently best for individuals, or a permanent and necessary duty must be the cause of evil, and some must be inevitably sacrificed to the convenience of others. In the estimate which you have made of the two states, it appears that the inconveniences of a single life are, in a great measure, necessary and certain, but those of the conjugal state accidental and avoidable.'

'I cannot forbear to flatter myself, that prudence and benevolence will make marriage happy. The general folly of mankind is the cause of general complaint. What can be expected but disappointment and repentance from a choice made in the immaturity of youth, in the ardour of desire, without judgment, without foresight, without inquiry after conformity of opinions, similarity of manners, rectitude of judgment, or purity of sentiment.'

'Such is the common process of marriage. A youth or maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of one another. Having little to divert attention, or diversify thought, they find themselves uneasy when they are apart, and therefore conclude that they shall be happy together. They marry, and discover what nothing but voluntary blindness before had concealed; they wear out life in altercations, and charge nature with cruelty.'

'From those early marriages proceeds likewise the rivalry of parents and children: the son is eager to enjoy the world before the father is willing

to forsake it, and there is hardly room at once for two generations. The daughter begins to bloom before the mother can be content to fade, and neither can forbear to wish for the absence of the other.

'Surely all these evils may be avoided by that deliberation and delay which prudence prescribes to irrevocable choice. In the variety and jollity of youthful pleasures life may be well enough supported without the help of a partner. Longer time will increase experience, and wider views will allow better opportunities of inquiry and selection: one advantage, at least, will be certain; the parents will be visibly older than their children.'

'What reason cannot collect,' said Nekayah, 'and what experiment has not yet taught, can be known only from the report of others. I have been told that late marriages are not eminently happy. This is a question too important to be neglected, and I have often proposed it to those, whose accuracy of remark, and comprehensiveness of knowledge, made their suffrages worthy of regard. They have generally determined, that it is dangerous for a man and woman to suspend their fate upon each other, at a time when opinions are fixed, and habits are established; when friendships have been contracted on both sides, when life has been planned into method, and the mind has long enjoyed the contemplation of its own prospects.'

'It is scarcely possible that two travelling through the world under the conduct of chance, should have been both directed to the same path, and it will not often happen that either will quit the track which custom has made pleasing. When the desultory levity of youth has settled into regularity, it is soon succeeded by pride ashamed to yield, or obstinacy delighting to contend. And even though mutual esteem produces mutual desire to please, time itself, as it modifies unchangeably the external mien, determines likewise the direction of the passions, and gives an inflexible rigidity to the manners. Long customs are not easily broken: he that attempts to change the course of his own life, very often labours in vain; and how shall we do that for others, which we are seldom able to do for ourselves?'

'But surely,' interposed the prince, 'you suppose the chief motive of choice forgotten or neglected. Whenever I shall seek a wife, it shall be my first question, whether she be willing to be led by reason?'

'Thus it is,' said Nekayah, 'that philosophers are deceived. There are a thousand familiar disputes which reason never can decide; questions that elude investigation, and make logick ridiculous; cases where something must be done, and where little can be said. Consider the state of mankind, and inquire how few can be supposed to act upon any occasions, whether small or great, with all the reasons of action present to their minds. Wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedness, who should be doomed to adjust by reason, every morning, all the minute detail of a domestic day.'

'Those who marry at an advanced age, will probably escape the encroachments of their children; but, in diminution of this advantage, they will be likely to leave them, ignorant and helpless, to a guardian's mercy: or, if that should not happen, they must at least go out of the world before they see those whom they love best, either wife or great.'

'From their children, if they have less to fear, they have less also to hope, and they lose, without equivalent, the joys of early love, and the convenience of uniting with manners pliant, and minds susceptible of new impressions, which might wear away their dissimilarities by long cohabitation, as soft bodies, by continual attrition, conform their surfaces to each other.'

'I believe it will be found that those who marry late are best pleased with their children, and those who marry early with their partners.'

'The union of these two affections,' said Rasselas, 'would produce all that could be wished. Perhaps there is a time when marriage might unite them, a time neither too early for the father, nor too late for the husband.'

'Every hour,' answered the princess, 'confirms my prejudice in favour of the position so often uttered by the mouth of Imlac, "That nature sets her gifts on the right hand and on the left." Those conditions, which flatter hope, and

and attract desire, are so constituted, that, as we approach one, we recede from another. There are goods so opposed that we cannot seize both; but, by too much prudence, may pass between them at too great a distance to reach either. This is often the fate of long consideration; he does nothing who endeavours to do more than is allowed to humanity. Flatter not yourself with contraries of pleasure. Of the blessings set before you make your choice, and be content. No man can taste the fruits of autumn while he is delighting his scent with the flowers of the spring. No man can, at the same time, fill his cup from the source and from the mouth of the Nile.

CHAP. XXX.

IMLAC ENTERS, AND CHANGES THE CONVERSATION.

HERE Imlac entered and interrupted them. Imlac, said Rasselas, 'I have been taking from the princess the dismal history of private life, and am almost discouraged from further search.

'It seems to me,' said Imlac, 'that while you are making the choice of life, you neglect to live. You wander about a single city, which, however large and diversified, can now afford few novelties, and forget that you are in a country, famous among the earliest monarchies for the power and wisdom of its inhabitants; a country where the sciences first dawned that illuminate the world, and beyond which the arts cannot be traced of civil society or domestic life.

The old Egyptians have left behind them monuments of industry and power, before which all European magnificence is confessed to fade away. The ruins of their architecture are the schools of modern builders, and from the wonders which time has spared we may conjecture, though uncertainly, what it has destroyed.

'My curiosity,' said Rasselas, 'does not very strongly lead me to survey piles of stone, or mounds of earth; my business is with man. I came hither to measure fragments of temples, trace choaked aqueducts, but

to look upon the various scenes of the present world.

'The things that are now before us,' said the princess, 'require attention, and deserve it. What have I to do with the heroes or the monuments of ancient times? with times which never can return, and heroes, whose form of life was different from all that the present condition of mankind requires or allows?

'To know any thing,' returned the poet, 'we must know its effects; to see men we must see their works, that we may learn what reason has dictated, or passion has incited, and find what are the most powerful motives of action. To judge rightly of the present, we must oppose it to the past; for all judgment is comparative, and of the future nothing can be known. The truth is, that no mind is much employed upon the present: recollection and anticipation fill up almost all our moments. Our passions are joy and grief, love and hatred, hope and fear. Of joy and grief the past is the object, and the future of hope and fear; even love and hatred respect the past, for the cause must have been before the effect.

'The present state of things is the consequence of the former, and it is natural to inquire what were the sources of the good that we enjoy, or the evil that we suffer. If we act only for ourselves, to neglect the study of history is not prudent: if we are entrusted with the care of others, it is not just. Ignorance, when it is voluntary, is criminal; and he may properly be charged with evil who refused to learn how he might prevent it.

'There is no part of history so generally useful as that which relates the progress of the human mind, the gradual improvement of reason, the successive advances of science, the vicissitudes of learning and ignorance which are the light and darkness of thinking beings, the extinction and resurrection of arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world. If accounts of battles and invasions are peculiarly the business of princes, the useful or elegant arts are not to be neglected; those who have kingdoms to govern, have understandings to cultivate.

'Example is always more efficacious than

than precept. A soldier is formed in war, and a painter must copy pictures. In this, contemplative life has the advantage: great actions are seldom seen, but the labours of art are always at hand for those who desire to know what art has been able to perform.

When the eye or the imagination is struck with any uncommon work, the next transition of an active mind is to the means by which it was performed. Here begins the true use of such contemplation; we enlarge our comprehension by new ideas, and perhaps recover some art lost to mankind, or learn what is less perfectly known in our own country. At least we compare our own with former times, and either rejoice at our improvements, or, what is the first motion towards good, discover our defects.

I am willing, said the prince, to see all that can deserve my search. —And I, said the princess, shall rejoice to learn something of the manners of antiquity.

The most pompous monument of Egyptian greatness, and one of the most bulky works of manual industry, said Imlac, are the Pyramids; fabrics raised before the time of history, and of which the earliest narratives afford us only uncertain traditions. Of these the greatest is still standing very little injured by time.

Let us visit them to-morrow, said Nekayah. I have often heard of the Pyramids, and shall not rest, till I have seen them within and without with my own eyes.

C H A P. XXXI.

THEY VISIT THE PYRAMIDS.

THE resolution being thus taken, they set out the next day. They laid tents upon their camels, being resolved to stay among the Pyramids till their curiosity was fully satisfied. They travelled gently, turned aside to every thing remarkable, stopped from time to time and conversed with the inhabitants, and observed the various appearances of towns ruined and inhabited, of wild and cultivated nature.

When they came to the great pyramid, they were astonished at the extent of the base, and the height of the top. Imlac

explained to them the principles upon which the pyramidal form was chosen for a fabrick intended to co-extend its duration with that of the world: he shewed that its gradual diminution gave it such stability, as defeated all the common attacks of the elements, and could scarcely be overthrown by earthquakes themselves, the least resistible of natural violence. A concussion that should shatter the pyramid would threaten the dissolution of the continent.

They measured all its dimensions, and pitched their tents at its foot. Next day they prepared to enter its interior apartments, and having hired the common guides, climbed up to the first passage, when the favourite of the princess, looking into the cavity, stepped back and trembled. Pekuah, said the princess, of what art thou afraid? —Of the narrow entrance, answered the lady, and of the dreadful gloom. I dare not enter a place which must surely be inhabited by unquiet souls. The original possessors of these dreadful vaults will start up before us, and perhaps shut us in for ever. She spoke, and threw her arms round the neck of her mistress.

If all your fear be of apparitions, said the prince, I will promise you safety: there is no danger from the dead; he that is once buried will be seen no more.

That the dead are seen no more, said Imlac, I will not undertake to maintain, against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages, and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparition of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which perhaps prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth: those, that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers, can very little weaken the general evidence; and some who deny it with their tongue, confess it by their fears.

Yet I do not mean to add new terrors to those which have already seized upon Pekuah. There can be no reason why spectres should haunt the pyramid more than other places, or why they should have power or will to hurt innocence and purity. Our





Our entrance is no violation of their privileges; we can take nothing from them, how then can we offend them?

My dear Pekuah, said the princess, I will always go before you, and Im-lac shall follow you. Remember that you are the companion of the princess of Abissinia.

If the princess is pleased that her servant should die, returned the lady, let her command some death less dreadful than inclosure in this horrid cavern. You know I dare not disobey you: I must go if you command me; but, if I once enter, I never shall come back.

The princess saw that her fear was too strong for expostulation or reproof, and embracing her, told her that she should stay in the tent till their return. Pekuah was yet not satisfied, but entreated the princess not to pursue so dreadful a purpose as that of entering the recesses of the pyramid. Though I cannot teach courage, said Nekayah, I must not learn cowardice; nor leave at last undone what I came hither only to do.

C H A P. XXXII.

THEY ENTER THE PYRAMID.

PEKUAH descended to the tents, and the rest entered the pyramid: they passed through the galleries, surveyed the vaults of marble, and examined the chest in which the body of the founder is supposed to have been deposited. They then sat down in one of the most spacious chambers to rest a while before they attempted to return.

We have now, said Im-lac, gratified our minds with an exact view of the greatest work of man, except the wall of China.

Of the wall it is very easy to assign the motive. It secured a wealthy and timorous nation from the incursions of Barbarians, whose unskillfulness in arts made it easier for them to supply their wants by rapine than by industry, and who from time to time poured in upon the habitations of peaceful commerce, as vultures descend upon domestick fowl. Their celerity and fierceness made the wall necessary, and their ignorance made it efficacious.

But for the pyramids no reason has ever been given adequate to the cost and labour of the work. The narrowness of the chambers proves that it could afford no retreat from enemies, and treasures might have been deposited at far less expence with equal security. It seems to have been erected only in compliance with that hunger of imagination which preys incessantly upon life, and must be always appeased by some employment. Those who have already all that they can enjoy, must enlarge their desires. He that has built for use, till use is supplied, must begin to build for vanity, and extend his plan to the utmost power of human performance, that he may not be soon reduced to form another wish.

I consider this mighty structure as a monument of the insufficiency of human enjoyments. A king, whose power is unlimited, and whose treasures surmount all real and imaginary wants, is compelled to solace, by the erection of a pyramid, the satiety of dominion and tastelessness of pleasures, and to amuse the tediousness of declining life, by seeing thousands labouring without end, and one stone, for no purpose, laid upon another. Whoever thou art, that, not content with a moderate condition, imaginest happiness in royal magnificence, and dreamest that command or riches can feed the appetite of novelty with perpetual gratifications, survey the pyramids, and confess thy folly!

C H A P. XXXIII.

THE PRINCESS MEETS WITH AN UNEXPECTED MISFORTUNE.

THEY rose up, and returned through the cavity at which they had entered, and the princess prepared for her favourite a long narrative of dark labyrinths, and costly rooms, and of the different impressions which the varieties of the way had made upon her. But when they came to their train, they found every one silent and dejected: the men discovered shame and fear in their countenances, and the women were weeping in the tents.

What had happened they did not try to conjecture, but immediately inquired, You

'You had scarcely entered into the pyramid,' said one of the attendants, 'when a troop of Arabs rushed upon us: we were too few to resist them, and too slow to escape. They were about to search the tents, set us on our camels, and drive us along before them, when the approach of some Turkish horsemen put them to flight; but they seized the lady Pekuah with her two maids, and carried them away: the Turks are now pursuing them by our instigation, but I fear they will not be able to overtake them.'

The princess was overpowered with surprise and grief. Rasselas, in the first heat of his resentment, ordered his servants to follow him, and prepared to pursue the robbers with his sabre in his hand. 'Sir,' said Imlac, 'what can you hope from violence or valour? the Arabs are mounted on horses trained to battle and retreat; we have only beasts of burden. By leaving our present station we may lose the princess, but cannot hope to regain Pekuah.'

In a short time the Turks returned, having not been able to reach the enemy. The princess burst out into new lamentations, and Rasselas could scarcely forbear to reproach them with cowardice; but Imlac was of opinion, that the escape of the Arabs was no addition to their misfortune, for perhaps they would have killed their captives rather than have resigned them.

CHAP. XXXIV.

THEY RETURN TO CAIRO WITHOUT PEKUAH.

THERE was nothing to be hoped from longer stay. They returned to Cairo repenting of their curiosity, censuring the negligence of the government, lamenting their own rashness which had neglected to procure a guard, imagining many expedients by which the loss of Pekuah might have been prevented, and resolving to do something for her recovery, though none could find any thing proper to be done.

Nekayah retired to her chamber, where her women attempted to comfort her, by telling her that all had their troubles, and that lady Pekuah had enjoyed much happiness in the world for a long time, and might reasonably expect a change

of fortune. They hoped that some good would befall her, whereforever she was, and that their mistress would find another friend who might supply her place.

The princess made them no answer, and they continued the form of condolence, not much grieved in their hearts that the favourite was lost.

Next day the prince presented to the Bassa a memorial of the wrong which he had suffered, and a petition for redress. The Bassa threatened to punish the robbers, but did not attempt to catch them, nor indeed, could any account or description be given by which he might direct the pursuit.

It soon appeared that nothing would be done by authority. Governors, being accustomed to hear of more crimes than they can punish, and more wrongs than they can redress, set themselves at ease by indiscriminate negligence, and presently forget the request when they lose sight of the petitioner.

Imlac then endeavoured to gain some intelligence by private agents. He found many who pretended to an exact knowledge of all the haunts of the Arabs, and to regular correspondence with their chiefs, and who readily undertook the recovery of Pekuah. Of these, some were furnished with money for their journey, and came back no more; some were liberally paid for accounts which a few days discovered to be false. But the princess would not suffer any means, however improbable, to be left untried. While she was doing something she kept her hope alive. As one expedient failed, another was suggested; when one messenger returned unsuccessful, another was dispatched to a different quarter.

Two months had now passed, and of Pekuah nothing had been heard; the hopes which they had endeavoured to raise in each other grew more languid, and the princess, when she saw nothing more to be tried, sunk down inconsolable in hopeless dejection. A thousand times she reproached herself with the easy compliance by which she permitted her favourite to stay behind her. 'Had not my fondness,' said she, 'lessened my authority, Pekuah had not dared to talk of her terrors. She ought to have feared me more than spectres. A severe look would have overpowered her; a peremptory command would have

' have compelled obedience. Why did
' foolish indulgence prevail upon me?
' Why did I not speak, and refuse to
' hear?'

' Great princess,' said Imlac, ' do
' not reproach yourself for your virtue,
' or consider that as blameable by which
' evil has accidentally been caused. Your
' tenderness for the timidity of Pekuah
' was generous and kind. When we
' act according to our duty, we commit
' the event to him by whose laws our
' actions are governed, and who will suf-
' fer none to be finally punished for obe-
' dience. When, in prospect of some
' good, whether natural or moral, we
' break the rules prescribed us, we with-
' draw from the direction of superior
' wisdom, and take all consequences
' upon ourselves. Man cannot so far
' know the connexion of causes and
' events, as that he may venture to do
' wrong in order to do right. When
' we pursue our end by lawful means,
' we may always console our miscarriage
' by the hope of future recompence.
' When we consult only our own policy,
' and attempt to find a nearer way to
' good, by overleaping the settled boun-
' daries of right and wrong, we cannot
' be happy even by success, because we
' cannot escape the consciousness of our
' fault: but, if we miscarry, the disap-
' pointment is irremediably embittered.
' How comfortless is the sorrow of him
' who feels at once the pangs of guilt,
' and the vexation of calamity which
' guilt has brought upon him.'

' Consider, princess, what would have
' been your condition, if the Lady Pe-
' kuah had entreated to accompany you,
' and being compelled to stay in the
' tents, had been carried away; or how
' would you have borne the thought, if
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' to madness by the remembrance of
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CHAP. XXXIV.

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F

' wonder

'You had scarcely entered into the pyramid,' said one of the attendants, 'when a troop of Arabs, rushed upon us: we were too few to resist them, and too slow to escape. They were about to search the tents, set us on our camels, and drive us along before them, when the approach of some Turkish horsemen put them to flight; but they seized the lady Pekuah with her two maids, and carried them away: the Turks are now pursuing them by our instigation, but I fear they will not be able to overtake them.'

The princess was overpowered with surprise and grief. Rasselas, in the first heat of his resentment, ordered his servants to follow him, and prepared to pursue the robbers with his sabre in his hand. 'Sir,' said Imlac, 'what can you hope from violence or valour? the Arabs are mounted on horses trained to battle and retreat; we have only beasts of burden. By leaving our present station we may lose the princess, but cannot hope to regain Pekuah.'

In a short time the Turks returned, having not been able to reach the enemy. The princess burst out into new lamentations, and Rasselas could scarcely forbear to reproach them with cowardice; but Imlac was of opinion, that the escape of the Arabs was no addition to their misfortune, for perhaps they would have killed their captives rather than have resigned them.

CHAP. XXXIV.

THEY RETURN TO CAIRO WITHOUT PEKUAH.

THERE was nothing to be hoped from longer stay. They returned to Cairo repenting of their curiosity, censuring the negligence of the government, lamenting their own rashness which had neglected to procure a guard, imagining many expedients by which the loss of Pekuah might have been prevented, and resolving to do something for her recovery, though none could find any thing proper to be done.

Nekayah retired to her chamber, where her women attempted to comfort her, by telling her that all had their troubles, and that lady Pekuah had enjoyed much happiness in the world for a long time, and might reasonably expect a change

of fortune. They hoped that some good would befall her wheresoever she was, and that their mistress would find another friend who might supply her place.

The princess made them no answer, and they continued the form of condolence, not much grieved in their hearts that the favourite was lost.

Next day the prince presented to the Bassa a memorial of the wrong which he had suffered, and a petition for redress. The Bassa threatened to punish the robbers, but did not attempt to catch them, nor indeed, could any account or description be given by which he might direct the pursuit.

It soon appeared that nothing would be done by authority. Governors, being accustomed to hear of more crimes than they can punish, and more wrongs than they can redress, set themselves at ease by indiscriminate negligence, and presently forget the request when they lose sight of the petitioner.

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'wonder at your absence; I know that the unhappy are never pleasing, and that all naturally avoid the contagion of misery. To hear complaints is wearisome alike to the wretched and the happy; for who would cloud, by adventitious grief, the short gleams of gaiety which life allows us? or who, that is struggling under his own evils, will add to them the miseries of another?'

'The time is at hand, when none shall be disturbed any longer by the sighs of Nekayah: my search after happiness is now at an end. I am resolved to retire from the world with all its flatteries and deceits, and will hide myself in solitude without any other care than to compose my thoughts, and regulate my hours by a constant succession of innocent occupations, till, with a mind purified from all earthly desires, I shall enter into that state, to which all are hastening, and in which I hope again to enjoy the friendship of Pekuah.'

'Do not entangle your mind,' said Imlac, 'by irrevocable determinations, nor increase the burthen of life by a voluntary accumulation of misery: the weariness of retirement will continue or increase when the loss of Pekuah is forgotten. That you have been deprived of one pleasure, is no very good reason for rejection of the rest.'

'Since Pekuah was taken from me,' said the prince, 'I have no pleasure to reject or to retain. She that has no one to love or trust has little to hope. She wants the radical principle of happiness. We may, perhaps, allow that what satisfaction this world can afford, must arise from the conjunction of wealth, knowledge, and goodness: wealth is nothing but as it is bestowed, and knowledge nothing but as it is communicated: they must therefore be imparted to others, and to whom could I now delight to impart them? Goodness affords the only comfort which can be enjoyed without a partner, and goodness may be practised in retirement.'

'How far solitude may admit goodness, or advance it, I shall not,' replied Imlac, 'dispute at present. Remember the confession of the pious hermit. You will wish to return into the world, when the image of your companion has

'left your thoughts.'—'That time,' said Nekayah, 'will never come. The generous frankness, the modest obscurity, and the faithful secrecy of my dear Pekuah, will always be missed, as I shall live longer to see vice and folly.'

'The state of a mind oppressed with a sudden calamity,' said Imlac, 'is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new created earth, who, when the first night came upon them, supposed that day would never return. When the clouds of sorrow gather over us, we see nothing beyond them, nor can imagine how they will be dispelled: yet a new day succeeded to the night, and sorrow is never long without a dawn of ease. But they who restrain themselves from receiving comfort, do as the savages would have done, had they put out their eyes when it was dark. Our minds, like our bodies, are in continual flux; something is hourly lost, and something acquired. To lose much at once is inconvenient to either; but while the vital powers remain uninjured, nature will find the means of reparation. Distance has the same effect on the mind as on the eye; and while we glide along the stream of time, whatever we leave behind us is always lessening, and that which we approach increasing in magnitude. Do not suffer life to stagnate; it will grow muddy for want of motion: commit yourself again to the current of the world; Pekuah will vanish by degrees; you will meet in your way some other favourite, or learn to diffuse yourself in general conversation.'

'At least,' said the prince, 'do not despair before all remedies have been tried: the enquiry after the unfortunate lady is still continued, and shall be carried on with yet greater diligence, on condition that you will promise to wait a year for the event, without any unalterable resolution.'

Nekayah thought this a reasonable demand, and made the promise to her brother, who had been advised by Imlac to require it. Imlac had, indeed, no great hope of regaining Pekuah; but he supposed, that if he could secure the interval of a year, the prince would be then in no danger of a cloister.

CHAP. XXXV.

PEKUAH IS STILL REMEMBERED.
THE PROGRESS OF SORROW.

NEKAYAH, seeing that nothing was omitted for the recovery of her favourite, and having, by her promise, set her intention of retirement at a distance, began imperceptibly to return to common cares and common pleasures. She rejoiced without her own consent at the suspension of her sorrows, and sometimes caught herself with indignation in the act of turning away her mind from the remembrance of her whom yet she resolved never to forget.

She then appointed a certain hour of the day for meditation on the merits and fondness of Pekuah, and for some weeks retired constantly at the time fixed, and returned with her eyes swollen and her countenance clouded. By degrees she grew less scrupulous, and suffered any important and pressing avocation to delay the tribute of daily tears. She then yielded to less occasions; sometimes forgot what she was indeed afraid to remember, and, at last, wholly released herself from the duty of periodical affliction.

Her real love of Pekuah was yet not diminished. A thousand occurrences brought her back to memory, and a thousand wants, which nothing but the confidence of friendship can supply, made her frequently regretted. She therefore solicited Imlac never to desist from enquiry, and to leave no art of intelligence untried, that, at least, she might have the comfort of knowing that she did not suffer by negligence or sluggishness. 'Yet what,' said she, 'is to be expected from our pursuit of happiness, when we find the state of life to be such, that happiness itself is the cause of misery? Why should we endeavour to attain that, of which the possession cannot be secured? I shall henceforward fear to yield my heart to excellence, however bright, or to fondness, however tender, lest I should lose again what I have lost in Pekuah.'

CHAP. XXXVI.

THE PRINCESS HEARS NEWS OF
PEKUAH.

IN seven months, one of the messengers, who had been sent away upon the day when the promise was drawn

from the princess, returned, after many unsuccessful rambles, from the borders of Nubia, with an account that Pekuah was in the hands of an Arab chief, who possessed a castle or fortress on the extremity of Egypt. The Arab, whose revenue was plunder, was willing to restore her, with her two attendants, for two hundred ounces of gold.

The price was no subject of debate. The princess was in extasies when she heard that her favourite was alive, and might so cheaply be ransomed. She could not think of delaying for a moment Pekuah's happiness or her own, but entreated her brother to send back the messenger with the sum required. Imlac being consulted, was not very confident of the veracity of the relator, and was still more doubtful of the Arab's faith, who might, if he were too liberally trusted, detain at once the money and the captives. He thought it dangerous to put themselves in the power of the Arab, by going into his district, and could not expect that the Rover would so much expose himself as to come into the lower country, where he might be seized by the forces of the Bassa.

It is difficult to negotiate where neither will trust. But Imlac, after some deliberation, directed the messenger to propose that Pekuah should be conducted by ten horsemen to the monastery of St. Antony, which is situated in the deserts of Upper-Egypt, where she should be met by the same number, and her ransom should be paid.

That no time might be lost, as they expected that the proposal would not be refused, they immediately began their journey to the monastery; and, when they arrived, Imlac went forward with the former messenger to the Arab's fortress. Rasselas was desirous to go with them; but neither his sister nor Imlac would consent. The Arab, according to the custom of his nation, observed the laws of hospitality with great exactness to those who put themselves into his power, and, in a few days, brought Pekuah with her maids, by easy journeys, to their place appointed, where receiving the stipulated price, he restored her with great respect to liberty and her friends, and undertook to conduct them back towards Cairo beyond all danger of robbery or violence.

The princess and her favourite embraced each other with transport too violent

lent to be expressed, and went out together to pour the tears of tenderness in secret, and exchange professions of kindness and gratitude. After a few hours they returned into the refectory of the convent, where, in the presence of the prior and his brethren, the prince required of Pekuah the history of her adventures,

C H A P. XXXVII.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE LADY PEKUAH.

‘**A**T what time, and in what manner, I was forced away,’ said Pekuah, ‘your servants have told you. The suddenness of the event struck me with surprise, and I was at first rather stupified than agitated with any passion of either fear or sorrow. My confusion was increased by the speed and tumult of our flight, while we were followed by the Turks, who, as it seemed, soon despaired to overtake us, or were afraid of those whom they made a shew of menacing.’

‘When the Arabs saw themselves out of danger they slackened their course, and as I was less harassed by external violence, I began to feel more uneasiness in my mind. After some time we stopped near a spring shaded with trees in a pleasant meadow, where we were set upon the ground, and offered such refreshments as our masters were partaking. I was suffered to sit with my maids apart from the rest, and none attempted to comfort or insult us. Here I first began to feel the full weight of my misery. The girls sat weeping in silence, and from time to time looked on me for succour. I knew not to what condition we were doomed, nor could conjecture where would be the place of our captivity, or whence to draw any hope of deliverance. I was in the hands of robbers and savages, and had no reason to suppose that their pity was more than their justice, or that they would forbear the gratification of any ardour of desire, or caprice of cruelty. I, however, kissed my maids, and endeavoured to pacify them by remarking, that we were yet treated with decency, and that, since we were now carried beyond per-

suit, there was no danger of violence to our lives.

‘When we were to be set again on horseback, my maids clung round me, and refused to be parted, but I commanded them not to irritate those who had us in their power. We travelled the remaining part of the day through an unfrequented and pathless country, and came by moon-light to the side of a hill, where the rest of the troop was stationed. Their tents were pitched, and their fires kindled, and our chief was welcomed as a man much beloved by his dependants.

‘We were received into a large tent, where we found women who had attended their husbands in the expedition. They set before us the supper which they had provided, and I eat it rather to encourage my maids, than to comply with any appetite of my own. When the meat was taken away, they spread the carpets for repose. I was weary, and hoped to find in sleep that remission of distress which nature seldom denies. Ordering myself therefore to be undrest, I observed that the women looked very earnestly upon me, not expecting, I suppose, to see me so submissively attended. When my upper vest was taken off, they were apparently struck with the splendour of my cloaths, and one of them timorously laid her hand upon the embroidery. She then went out, and, in a short time, came back with another woman, who seemed to be of higher rank, and greater authority. She did, at her entrance, the usual act of reverence, and taking me by the hand, placed me in a smaller tent, spread with finer carpets, where I spent the night quietly with my maids.

‘In the morning, as I was sitting on the grass, the chief of the troop came towards me. I rose up to receive him, and he bowed with great respect, “Illustrious lady,” said he, “my fortune is better than I had presumed to hope; I am told by my women, that I have a princess in my camp.”—“Sir,” answered I, “your women have deceived themselves and you; I am not a princess, but an unhappy stranger who intended soon to have left this country, in which I am now to be imprisoned for ever.”—“Whoever, or whencesoever, you are,” returned the Arab,

“ Arab, “ your drefs, and that of your
“ fervants, fhew your rank to be high,
“ and your wealth to be great. Why
“ fhould you, who can fo eafily procure
“ your ransom, think yourfelf in danger
“ of perpetual captivity? The purpofe of
“ my incursions is to increafe my riches,
“ or, more properly, to gather tribute.
“ The fons of Ifhmael are the natural and
“ hereditary lords of this part of the con-
“ tinent, which is ufurped by late invaders,
“ and low-born tyrants, from whom
“ we are compelled to take by the fword
“ what is denied to juftice. The violence
“ of war admits no diftinction; the lance,
“ that is lifted at guilt and power, will
“ fometimes fall on innocence and gen-
“ tlenefs.”

“ How little,” faid I, “ did I expect
“ that yefterday it fhould have fallen
“ upon me !”

“ Misfortunes,” answered the Arab,
“ fhould always be expected. If the eye
“ of hoftility could learn reverence or
“ pity, excellence like yours had been
“ exempt from injury. But the angels
“ of affliction fpread their toils alike for
“ the virtuous and the wicked, for the
“ mighty and the mean. Do not be dif-
“ confoled : I am not one of the lawlefs
“ and cruel rovers of the defart; I know
“ the rules of civil life: I will fix your
“ ransom, give a paffport to your mef-
“ fenger, and perform my ftipulation
“ with nice punctuality.”

“ You will eafily believe that I was
“ pleafed with his courtefy : and finding
“ that his predominant paffion was defire
“ of money, I began now to think my
“ danger lefs, for I knew that no fum
“ would be thought too great for the re-
“ lease of Pekuah. I told him, that he
“ fhould have no reafon to charge me
“ with ingratitude, if I was ufed with
“ kindnefs, and that any ransom which
“ could be expected for a maid of com-
“ mon rank, would be paid; but that
“ he muft not perfift to rate me as a
“ princefs. He faid, he would confider
“ what he fhould demand, and then fmil-
“ ing, bowed and retired.

“ Soon after the women came about
“ me, each contending to be more offi-
“ cious than the other, and my maids
“ themfelves were ferved with reverence.
“ We travelled onward by fhort journeys.
“ On the fourth day the chief told me,
“ that my ransom muft be two hundred
“ ounces of gold; which I not only pro-
“ mifed him, but told him, that I would

“ add fifty more, if I and my maids were
“ honourably treated.

“ I never knew the power of gold be-
“ fore. From that time I was the leader
“ of the troop. The march of every day
“ was longer or fhorter as I commanded,
“ and the tents were pitched where I
“ chofe to reft. We now had camels
“ and other conveniences for travel, my
“ own women were always at my fide,
“ and I amused myfelf with obferving
“ the manners of the vagrant nations,
“ and with viewing remains of ancient
“ edifices, with which thefe deferted
“ countries appear to have been, in fome
“ diftant age, lavifhly embellifhed.

“ The chief of the band was a man
“ far from illiterate: he was able to tra-
“ vel by the ftars or the compafs, and
“ had marked, in his erratick expedi-
“ tions, fuch places as are moft worthy
“ the notice of a paffenger. He obferved
“ to me, that buildings are always beft
“ preferved in places little frequented,
“ and difficult of accefs : for, when once
“ a country declines from it’s primitive
“ fplendour, the more inhabitants are
“ left, the quicker ruin will be made.
“ Walls fupply ftones more eafily than
“ quarries, and palaces and temples will
“ be demolifhed, to make ftables of gra-
“ nate, and cottages of porphyry.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

THE ADVENTURES OF PEKUAH CONTINUED.

“ WE wandered about in this man-
“ ner for fome weeks, whether,
“ as our chief pretended, for my gratifi-
“ cation, or as I rather fufpected, fir
“ fome convenience of his own. I en-
“ deavoured to appear contented where
“ fullennefs and refentment would have
“ been of no ufe, and that endeavour
“ conduced much to the calmnefs of my
“ mind; but my heart was always with
“ Nekayah, and the troubles of the night
“ much over-balanced the amufements of
“ the day. My women, who threw all
“ their cares upon their miftrefs, fet their
“ minds at eafe from the time when they
“ faw me treated with refpect, and gave
“ themfelves up to the incidental allevia-
“ tions of our fatigue without follicitude
“ or forrow. I was pleafed with their
“ pleafure, and animated with their con-
“ fidence. My condition had loft much
“ of

of it's terror, since I found that the Arab ranged the country merely to get riches. Avarice is an uniform and tractable vice: other intellectual distempers are different in different constitutions of mind; that which soothes the pride of one will offend the pride of another; but to the favour of the covetous there is a ready way; bring money and nothing is denied.

At last we came to the dwelling of our chief, a strong and spacious house built with stone in an island of the Nile, which lies, as I was told, under the tropick. "Lady," said the Arab, "you shall rest after your journey a few weeks in this place, where you are to consider yourself as sovereign. My occupation is war: I have therefore chosen this obscure residence, from which I can issue unexpected, and to which I can retire unpursued. You may now repose in security: here are few pleasures, but here is no danger." He then led me into the inner apartments, and seating me on the richest couch, bowed to the ground. His women, who considered me as a rival, looked on me with malignity; but being soon informed that I was a great lady detained only for my ransom, they began to vie with each other in obsequiousness and reverence.

Being again comforted with new assurances of speedy liberty, I was for some days diverted from impatience by the novelty of the place. The turrets overlooked the country to a great distance, and afforded a view of many windings of the stream. In the day I wandered from one place to another, as the course of the sun varied the splendour of the prospect; and saw many things which I had never seen before. The crocodiles and river-horses are common in this unpeopled region, and I often looked upon them with terror, though I knew that they could not hurt me. For some time I expected to see mermaids and tritons, which, as Imlac has told me, the European travellers have stationed in the Nile, but no such beings ever appeared, and the Arab, when I enquired after them, laughed at my credulity.

At night the Arab always attended me to a tower set apart for celestial observations, where he endeavoured to teach me the names and courses of the stars. I had no great inclination to

this study, but an appearance of attention was necessary to please my instructor, who valued himself for his skill; and, in a little while, I found some employment requisite to beguile the tediousness of time, which was to be passed always amidst the same objects. I was weary of looking in the morning on things from which I had turned away weary in the evening: I therefore was at last willing to observe the stars rather than do nothing, but could not always compose my thoughts, and was very often thinking on Nekayah, when others imagined me contemplating the sky. Soon after the Arab went upon another expedition, and then my only pleasure was to talk with my maids about the accident by which we were carried away, and the happiness that we should all enjoy at the end of our captivity.

"There were women in your Arab's fortress," said the princess; "why did you not make them your companions, enjoy their conversation, and partake their diversions? In a place where they found business or amusement, why should you alone sit corroded with idle melancholy? or why could not you bear, for a few months, that condition to which they were condemned for life?"

"The diversions of the women," answered Pekuah, "were only childish play, by which the mind, accustomed to stronger operations, could not be kept busy. I could do all which they delighted in doing by powers merely sensitive, while my intellectual faculties were flown to Cairo. They ran from room to room as a bird hops from wire to wire in his cage. They danced for the sake of motion, as lambs frisk in a meadow. One sometimes pretended to be hurt, that the rest might be alarmed; or hid herself, that another might seek her. Part of their time passed in watching the progress of light bodies that floated on the river, and part in marking the various forms into which clouds broke in the sky.

Their business was only needle-work, in which I and my maids sometimes helped them; but you know that the mind will easily straggle from the fingers, nor will you suspect that captivity and absence from Nekayah could receive solace from silken flowers.

Nor was much satisfaction to be hoped

‘ hoped from their conversation : for of what could they be expected to talk ? They had seen nothing ; for they had lived from early youth in that narrow spot : of what they had not seen they could have no knowledge, for they could not read. They had no ideas but of the few things that were within their view, and had hardly names for any thing but their clothes and their food. As I bore a superiour character, I was often called to terminate their quarrels, which I decided as equitably as I could. If it could have amused me to hear the complaints of each against the rest, I might have been often detained by long stories ; but the motives of their animosity were so small, that I could not listen without intercepting the tale.’

‘ How,’ said Rasselas, ‘ can the Arab, whom you represented as a man of more than common accomplishments, take any pleasure in his seraglio, when it is filled only with women like these ? Are they exquisitely beautiful ?’

‘ They do not,’ said Pekuah, ‘ want that unaffecting and ignoble beauty which may subsist without spriteliness or sublimity, without energy of thought or dignity of virtue. But to a man like the Arab such beauty was only a flower casually plucked and carelessly thrown away. Whatever pleasures he might find among them, they were not those of friendship or society. When they were playing about him he looked on them with inattentive superiority : when they vied for his regard, he sometimes turned away disgusted. As they had no knowledge, their talk could take nothing from the tediousness of life : as they had no choice, their fondness, or appearance of fondness, excited in him neither pride nor gratitude ; he was not exalted in his own esteem by the smiles of a woman who saw no other man, nor was much obliged by that regard, of which he could never know the sincerity, and which he might often perceive to be exerted, not so much to delight him as to pain a rival. That which he gave, and they received, as love, was only a careless distribution of superfluous time, such love as man can bestow upon that which he despises, such as has neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow.’

‘ You have reason, lady, to think yourself happy,’ said Imlac, ‘ that you

‘ have been thus easily dismissed. How could a mind, hungry for knowledge, be willing, in an intellectual famine, to lose such a banquet as Pekuah’s conversation ?’

‘ I am inclined to believe,’ answered Pekuah, ‘ that he was for some time in suspense ; for, notwithstanding his promise, whenever I proposed to dispatch a messenger to Cairo, he found some excuse for delay. While I was detained in his house he made many incursions into the neighbouring countries, and, perhaps, he would have refused to discharge me, had his plunder been equal to his wishes. He returned always courteous, related his adventures, delighted to hear my observations, and endeavoured to advance my acquaintance with the stars. When I importuned him to send away my letters, he soothed me with professions of honour and sincerity ; and, when I could be no longer decently denied, put his troop again in motion, and left me to govern in his absence. I was much afflicted by this studied procrastination, and was sometimes afraid that I should be forgotten ; that you would leave Cairo, and I must end my days in an island of the Nile.

‘ I grew at last hopeless and dejected, and cared so little to entertain him, that he for a while more frequently talked with my maids. That he should fall in love with them, or with me, might have been equally fatal, and I was not much pleased with the growing friendship. My anxiety was not long ; for, as I recovered some degree of cheerfulness, he returned to me, and I could not forbear to despise my former uneasiness.

‘ He still delayed to send for my ransom, and would, perhaps, never have determined, had not your agent found his way to him. The gold, which he would not fetch, he could not reject when it was offered. He hastened to prepare for our journey hither, like a man delivered from the pain of an intestine conflict. I took leave of my companions in the house, who dismissed me with cold indifference.’

Nekayah having heard her favourite’s relation, rose and embraced her ; and Rasselas gave her an hundred ounces of gold, which she presented to the Arab for the fifty that were promised.

C H A P. XXXIX.

THE HISTORY OF A MAN OF LEARNING.

THEY returned to Cairo, and were so well pleased at finding themselves together, that none of them went much abroad. The prince began to love learning, and one day declared to Imlac, that he intended to devote himself to science, and pass the rest of his days in literary solitude.

‘Before you make your final choice,’ answered Imlac, ‘you ought to examine it’s hazards, and converse with some of those who are grown old in the company of themselves. I have just left the observatory of one of the most learned astronomers in the world, who has spent forty years in unwearied attention to the motions and appearances of the celestial bodies, and has drawn out his soul in endless calculations. He admits a few friends once a month to hear his deductions and enjoy his discoveries. I was introduced as a man of knowledge worthy of his notice. Men of various ideas, and fluent conversation, are commonly welcome to those whose thoughts have been long fixed upon a single point, and who find the images of other things stealing away. I delighted him with my remarks; he smiled at the narrative of my travels, and was glad to forget the constellations, and descend for a moment into the lower world.

‘On the next day of vacation I renewed my visit, and was so fortunate as to please him again. He relaxed from that time the severity of his rule, and permitted me to enter at my own choice. I found him always busy, and always glad to be relieved. As each knew much which the other was desirous of learning, we exchanged our notions with great delight. I perceived that I had every day more of his confidence, and always found new cause of admiration in the profundity of his mind. His comprehension is vast, his memory capacious and retentive, his discourse is methodical, and his expression clear.

‘His integrity and benevolence are equal to his learning. His deepest researches and most favourite studies are willingly interrupted for any opportu-

nity of doing good by his counsel or his riches. To his closest retreat, at his most busy moments, all are admitted that want his assistance: “For though I exclude idleness and pleasure, I will never,” says he, “bar my doors against charity. To man is permitted the contemplation of the skies, but the practice of virtue is commanded.”

‘Surely,’ said the princess, ‘this man is happy.’

‘I visited him,’ said Imlac, ‘with more and more frequency, and was every time more enamoured of his conversation: he was sublime without haughtiness, courteous without formality, and communicative without ostentation. I was at first, great princess, of your opinion, thought him the happiest of mankind, and often congratulated him on the blessing that he enjoyed. He seemed to hear nothing with indifference but the praises of his condition, to which he always returned a general answer, and diverted the conversation to some other topic.

‘Amidst this willingness to be pleased, and labour to please, I had quickly reason to imagine that some painful sentiment pressed upon his mind. He often looked up earnestly towards the sun, and let his voice fall in the midst of his discourse. He would sometimes, when we were alone, gaze upon me in silence with the air of a man who longed to speak what he was yet resolved to suppress. He would often send for me with vehement injunctions of haste, though, when I came to him, he had nothing extraordinary to say. And sometimes, when I was leaving him, would call me back, pause a few moments, and then dismiss me.

C H A P. XL.

THE ASTRONOMER DISCOVERS THE CAUSE OF HIS UNEASINESS.

AT last the time came when the secret burst his reserve. We were sitting together last night in the turret of his house, watching the emergence of a satellite of Jupiter. A sudden tempest clouded the sky, and disappointed our observation. We sat a while silent in the dark, and then he addressed himself to me in these words. “Imlac, I have

" have long considered thy friendship as the greatest blessing of my life. Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful. I have found in thee all the qualities requisite for trust, benevolence, experience, and fortitude. I have long discharged an office which I must soon quit at the call of nature, and shall rejoice in the hour of imbecility and pain to devolve it upon thee."

" I thought myself honoured by this testimony, and protested, that whatever could conduce to his happiness would add likewise to mine."

" Hear, Imlac, what thou wilt not without difficulty credit. I have possessed for five years the regulation of weather, and the distribution of the seasons: the sun has listened to my dictates, and passed from tropick to tropick by my direction; the clouds, at my call, have poured their waters, and the Nile has overflowed at my command; I have restrained the rage of the dog-star, and mitigated the ferours of the crab. The winds alone, of all the elemental powers, have hitherto refused my authority, and multitudes have perished by equinoctial tempests, which I found myself unable to prohibit or restrain. I have administered this great office with exact justice, and made to the different nations of the earth an impartial dividend of rain and sunshine. What must have been the misery of half the globe, if I had limited the clouds to particular regions, or confined the sun to either side of the equator?"

C H A P. XLI.

THE OPINION OF THE ASTRONOMER IS EXPLAINED AND JUSTIFIED.

" I Suppose he discovered in me, through the obscurity of the room, some tokens of amazement and doubt, for, after a short pause, he proceeded thus:

" Not to be easily credited will neither surprise nor offend me; for I am, probably, the first of human beings to whom this trust has been imparted. Nor do I know whether to deem this distinction a reward or punishment; since I have possessed it I have been

" far less happy than before, and nothing but the consciousness of good intention could have enabled me to support the weariness of unremitted vigilance."

" How long, Sir," said I, " has this great office been in your hands?"

" About ten years ago," said he, " my daily observations of the changes of the sky led me to consider, whether, if I had the power of the seasons, I could confer greater plenty upon the inhabitants of the earth. This contemplation fastened on my mind, and I sat days and nights in imaginary dominion, pouring upon this country and that the showers of fertility, and seconding every fall of rain with a due proportion of sunshine. I had yet only the will to do good, and did not imagine that I should ever have the power."

" One day, as I was looking on the fields withering with heat, I felt in my mind a sudden wish that I could send rain on the southern mountains, and raise the Nile to an inundation. In the hurry of my imagination I commanded rain to fall, and by comparing the time of my command with that of the inundation, I found that the clouds had listened to my lips."

" Might not some other cause," said I, " produce this concurrence? The Nile does not always rise on the same day."

" Do not believe," said he with impatience, " that such objections could escape me: I reasoned long against my own conviction, and laboured against truth with the utmost obstinacy. I sometimes suspected myself of madness, and should not have dared to impart this secret but to a man like you, capable of distinguishing the wonderful from the impossible, and the incredible from the false."

" Why, Sir," said I, " do you call that incredible, which you know, or think you know, to be true?"

" Because," said he, " I cannot prove it by any external evidence; and I know too well the laws of demonstration to think that my conviction ought to influence another, who cannot, like me, be conscious of it's force. I, therefore, shall not attempt to gain credit by disputation. It is sufficient that I feel this power, that I have long possessed, and every day exerted it. But the life of man is short, the in-

"firmities of age increase upon me, and
 "the time will soon come, when the re-
 "gulator of the year must mingle with
 "the dust. The care of appointing a
 "successor has long disturbed me; the
 "night and the day have been spent in
 "comparisons of all the characters which
 "have come to my knowledge, and I
 "have yet found none so worthy as thy-
 "self.

C H A P. XLII.

THE ASTRONOMER LEAVES IMLAC HIS DIRECTIONS.

"**H**EAR, therefore, what I shall
 "impart with attention, such
 "as the welfare of a world requires. If
 "the task of a king be considered as dif-
 "ficult, who has the care only of a few
 "millions, to whom he cannot do much
 "good or harm, what must be the an-
 "xiety of him, on whom depends the
 "action of the elements, and the great
 "gifts of light and heat!—Hear me
 "therefore with attention.

"I have diligently considered the
 "position of the earth and sun, and
 "formed innumerable schemes in which
 "I changed their situation. I have
 "sometimes turned aside the axis of the
 "earth, and sometimes varied the eclip-
 "tick of the sun: but I have found it
 "impossible to make a disposition by
 "which the world may be advantaged;
 "what one region gains, another loses
 "by an imaginable alteration, even
 "without considering the distant parts
 "of the solar system with which we are
 "unacquainted. Do not therefore, in
 "thy administration of the year, indulge
 "thy pride by innovation; do not please
 "thyself with thinking that thou
 "canst make thyself renowned to all fu-
 "ture ages, by disordering the seasons.
 "The memory of mischief is no desir-
 "able fame. Much less will it become
 "thee to let kindness or interest prevail.
 "Never rob other countries of rain to
 "pour it on thine own. For us the
 "Nile is sufficient."

"I promised, that when I possessed the
 "power, I would use it with inflexible
 "integrity; and he dismissed me, pres-
 "sing my hand. "My heart," said
 "he, "will be now at rest, and my bene-
 "volence will no more destroy my quiet;
 "I have found a man of wisdom and

"virtue, to whom I can cheerfully be-
 "queath the inheritance of the sun."

The prince heard this narration with
 very serious regard; but the princess
 smiled, and Pekuah convulsed herself
 with laughter. "Ladies," said Imlac,
 "to mock the heaviest of human afflic-
 "tions is neither charitable nor wise.
 "Few can attain this man's knowledge,
 "and few practise his virtues; but all
 "may suffer his calamity. Of the un-
 "certainties of our present state, the most
 "dreadful and alarming is the uncertain
 "continuance of reason."

The princess was recollected, and the
 favourite was abashed. Rasselas, more
 deeply affected, inquired of Imlac, whe-
 ther he thought such maladies of the
 mind frequent, and how they were con-
 tracted?

C H A P. XLIII.

THE DANGEROUS PREVALENCE OF IMAGINATION.

"**D**ISORDERS of intellect," an-
 "swered Imlac, "happen much
 "more often than superficial observers
 "will easily believe. Perhaps, if we
 "speak with rigorous exactness, no hu-
 "man mind is in it's right state. There
 "is no man whose imagination does not
 "sometimes predominate over his rea-
 "son, who can regulate his attention
 "wholly by his will, and whose ideas
 "will come and go, at his command. No
 "man will be found in whose mind any
 "notions do not sometimes tyrannize,
 "and force him to hope or fear beyond
 "the limits of sober probability. All
 "power of fancy over reason is a degree
 "of insanity; but while this power is
 "such as we can controul and repress, it
 "is not visible to others, nor considered
 "as any depravation of the mental fa-
 "culties: it is not pronounced madness
 "but when it becomes ungovernable,
 "and apparently influences speech or
 "action.

"To indulge the power of fiction,
 "and send imagination out upon the
 "wing, is often the sport of those who
 "delight too much in silent speculation.
 "When we are alone we are not always
 "busy; the labour of excogitation is too
 "violent to last long; the ardour of in-
 "quiry will sometimes give way to idleness
 "or satiety. He who has nothing
 "external

external that can divert him, must find pleasure in his own thoughts, and must conceive himself what he is not; for who is pleased with what he is? He then expatiates in boundless futurity, and culls from all imaginable conditions that which for the present moment he should most desire, amuses his desires with impossible enjoyments, and confers upon his pride unattainable dominion. The mind dances from scene to scene, unites all pleasures in all combinations, and riots in delights, which nature and fortune, with all their bounty, cannot bestow.

In time, some particular train of ideas fixes the attention, all other intellectual gratifications are rejected, the mind, in weariness or leisure, recurs constantly to the favourite conception, and feasts on the luscious falsehood, whenever she is offended with the bitterness of truth. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed; she grows first imperious, and in time despotick. Then fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish.

This, Sir, is one of the dangers of solitude, which the hermit has confessed not always to promote goodness, and the astronomer's misery has proved to be not always propitious to wisdom.

I will no more, said the favourite, imagine myself the queen of Abissinia. I have often spent the hours, which the princess gave to my own disposal, in adjusting ceremonies and regulating the court; I have repressed the pride of the powerful, and granted the petitions of the poor; I have built new palaces in more happy situations, planted groves upon the tops of mountains, and have exulted in the beneficence of royalty, till, when the princess entered, I had almost forgotten to bow down before her.

And I, said the princess, will not allow myself any more to play the shepherdess in my waking dreams. I have often soothed my thoughts with the quiet and innocence of pastoral employments, till I have in my chamber heard the winds whistle, and the sheep bleat: sometimes freed the lamb entangled in the thicket, and sometimes with my crook encountered the wolf.

I have a dress like that of the village maids, which I put on to help my imagination; and a pipe on which I play softly, and suppose myself followed by my flocks.

I will confess, said the prince, an indulgence of fantastick delight more dangerous than yours. I have frequently endeavoured to imagine the possibility of a perfect government, by which all wrong should be restrained, all vice reformed, and all the subjects preserved in tranquillity and innocence. This thought produced innumerable schemes of reformation, and dictated many useful regulations and salutary edicts. This has been the sport, and sometimes the labour, of my solitude; and I start, when I think with how little anguish I once supposed the death of my father and my brothers.

Such, says Imlac, are the effects of visionary schemes: when we first form them we know them to be absurd; but familiarize them by degrees, and in time lose sight of their folly.

CHAP. XLIV.

THEY DISCOURSE WITH AN OLD MAN.

THE evening was now far past, and they rose to return home. As they walked along the bank of the Nile, delighted with the beams of the moon quivering on the water, they saw at a small distance an old man, whom the prince had often heard in the assembly of the sages. Yonder, said he, is one whose years have calmed his passions, but not clouded his reason: let us close the disquisitions of the night, by inquiring what are his sentiments of his own state, that we may know whether youth alone is to struggle with vexation, and whether any better hope remains for the latter part of life.

Here the sage approached and saluted them. They invited him to join their walk, and prattled a while, as acquaintance that had unexpectedly met one another. The old man was cheerful and talkative, and the way seemed short in his company. He was pleased to find himself not disregarded, accompanied them to their house, and, at the prince's request,

quest, entered with them. They placed him in the seat of honour, and set wine and conserves before him.

'Sir,' said the princess, 'an evening walk must give to a man of learning, like you, pleasures which ignorance and youth can hardly conceive. You know the qualities and the causes of all that you behold, the laws by which the river flows, the periods in which the planets perform their revolutions. Every thing must supply you with contemplation, and renew the consciousness of your own dignity.'

'Lady,' answered he, 'let the gay and the vigorous expect pleasure in their excursions; it is enough that age can obtain ease. To me the world has lost it's novelty: I look round, and see what I remember to have seen in happier days. I rest against a tree, and consider, that in the same shade I once disputed upon the annual overflow of the Nile with a friend who is now silent in the grave. I cast my eyes upwards, fix them on the changing moon, and think with pain on the vicissitudes of life. I have ceased to take much delight in physical truth; for what have I to do with those things which I am soon to leave?'

'You may at least recreate yourself,' said Imlac, 'with the recollection of an honourable and useful life, and enjoy the praise which all agree to give you.'

'Praise,' said the sage, with a sigh, 'is to an old man an empty sound. I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her son, nor wife to partake the honours of her husband. I have outlived my friends and my rivals. Nothing is now of much importance; for I cannot extend my interest beyond myself. Youth is delighted with applause, because it is considered as the earnest of some future good, and because the prospect of life is far extended: but to me, who am now declining to decrepitude, there is little to be feared from the malevolence of men, and yet less to be hoped from their affection or esteem. Something they may yet take away, but they can give me nothing. Riches would now be useless, and high employment would be pain. My retrospect of life recalls to my view many opportunities of good neglected, much

time squandered upon trifles, and more lost in idleness and vacancy. I leave many great designs unattempted, and many great attempts unfinished. My mind is burdened with no heavy crime, and therefore I compose myself to tranquillity; endeavour to abstract my thoughts from hopes and cares, which, though reason knows them to be vain, still try to keep their old possession of the heart; expect, with serene humility, that hour which nature cannot long delay; and hope to possess, in a better state, that happiness which here I could not find, and that virtue which here I have not attained.'

He rose and went away, leaving his audience not much elated with the hope of long life. The prince consoled himself with remarking, that it was not reasonable to be disappointed by this account; for age had never been considered as the season of felicity, and if it was possible to be easy in decline and weakness, it was likely that the days of vigour and alacrity might be happy: that the noon of life might be bright, if the evening could be calm.

The princess suspected that age was querulous and malignant, and delighted to repress the expectations of those who had newly entered the world. She had seen the possessors of estates look with envy on their heirs, and known many who enjoyed pleasure no longer than they can confine it to themselves.

Pekuah conjectured, that the man was older than he appeared, and was willing to impute his complaints to delirious dejection: or else supposed that he had been unfortunate, and was therefore discontented: 'For nothing,' said she, 'is more common, than to call our own condition the condition of life.'

Imlac, who had no desire to see them depressed, smiled at the comforts which they could so readily procure to themselves, and remembered, that at the same age, he was equally confident of unmingled prosperity, and equally fertile of consolatory expedients. He forbore to force upon them unwelcome knowledge, which time itself would too soon impress. The princess and her lady retired; the madness of the astronomer hung upon their minds, and they desired Imlac to enter upon his office, and delay next morning the rising of the sun.

C H A P. XLV.

THE PRINCESS AND PEKUAH VISIT
THE ASTRONOMER.

THE princess and Pekuah having talked in private of Imlac's astronomer, thought his character at once so amiable and so strange, that they could not be satisfied without a nearer knowledge; and Imlac was requested to find the means of bringing them together.

This was somewhat difficult; the philosopher had never received any visits from women, though he lived in a city that had in it many Europeans who followed the manners of their own countries, and many from other parts of the world, that lived there with European liberty. The ladies would not be refused, and several schemes were proposed for the accomplishment of their design. It was proposed to introduce them as strangers in distress, to whom the sage was always accessible; but, after some deliberation, it appeared, that by this artifice no acquaintance could be formed, for their conversation would be short, and they could not decently importune him often. 'This,' said Rasselas, 'is true; but I have yet a stronger objection against the misrepresentation of your state. I have always considered it as treason against the great republic of human nature, to make any man's virtues the means of deceiving him, whether on great or little occasions. All imposture weakens confidence, and chills benevolence. When the sage finds that you are not what you seemed, he will feel the resentment natural to a man who, conscious of great abilities, discovers that he has been tricked by understandings meaner than his own, and, perhaps, the distrust, which he can never afterwards wholly lay aside, may stop the voice of counsel, and close the hand of charity; and where will you find the power of restoring his benefactions to mankind, or his peace to himself?'

To this no reply was attempted, and Imlac began to hope that their curiosity would subside; but, next day, Pekuah told him, she had now found an honest pretence for a visit to the astronomer, for she would solicit permission to continue under him the studies in which she

had been initiated by the Arab, and the princess might go with her either as a fellow-student, or because a woman could not decently come alone. 'I am afraid,' said Imlac, 'that he will be soon weary of your company: men advanced far in knowledge do not love to repeat the elements of their art, and I am not certain that even of the elements, as he will deliver them connected with inferences, and mingled with reflections, you are a very capable auditress.'—'That,' said Pekuah, 'must be my care: I ask of you only to take me thither. My knowledge is, perhaps, more than you imagine it, and, by concurring always with his opinions, I shall make him think it greater than it is.'

The astronomer, in pursuance of this resolution, was told, that a foreign lady, travelling in search of knowledge, had heard of his reputation, and was desirous to become his scholar. The uncommonness of the proposal raised at once his surprise and curiosity; and when, after a short deliberation, he consented to admit her, he could not stay without impatience till the next day.

The ladies dressed themselves magnificently, and were attended by Imlac to the astronomer, who was pleased to see himself approached with respect by persons of so splendid an appearance. In the exchange of the first civilities he was timorous and bashful; but when the talk became regular, he recollected his powers, and justified the character which Imlac had given. Inquiring of Pekuah, what could have turned her inclination towards astronomy? he received from her a history of her adventure at the pyramid, and of the time passed in the Arab's island. She told her tale with ease and elegance, and her conversation took possession of his heart. The discourse was then turned to astronomy. Pekuah displayed what she knew: he looked upon her as a prodigy of genius, and entreated her not to desist from a study which she had so happily begun.

They came again and again, and were every time more welcome than before. The sage endeavoured to amuse them, that they might prolong their visits, for he found his thoughts grow brighter in their company; the clouds of solicitude vanished by-degrees, as he forced himself to entertain them, and he grieved when

when he was left at their departure to his old employment of regulating the seasons.

The princess and her favourite had now watched his lips for several months, and could not catch a single word from which they could judge whether he continued, or not, in the opinion of his preternatural commission. They often contrived to bring him to an open declaration; but he easily eluded all their attacks, and on which side soever they pressed him, escaped from them to some other topic.

As their familiarity increased, they invited him often to the house of Imlac, where they distinguished him by extraordinary respect. He began gradually to delight in sublunary pleasures. He came early, and departed late; laboured to recommend himself by assiduity and compliance; excited their curiosity after new arts, that they might still want his assistance; and when they made any excursion of pleasure or inquiry, entreated to attend them.

By long experience of his integrity and wisdom, the prince and his sister were convinced that he might be trusted without danger; and lest he should draw any false hopes from the civilities which he received, discovered to him their condition, with the motives of their journey; and required his opinion on the choice of life.

'Of the various conditions which the world spreads before you, which you shall prefer,' said the sage, 'I am not able to instruct you. I can only tell that I have chosen wrong. I have passed my time in study without experience; in the attainment of sciences which can, for the most part, be but remotely useful to mankind. I have purchased knowledge at the expence of all the common comforts of life; I have missed the endearing elegance of female friendship, and the happy commerce of domestick tenderness. If I have obtained any prerogatives above other students, they have been accompanied with fear, disquiet, and scrupulosity; but even of these prerogatives, whatever they were, I have, since my thoughts have been diversified by more intercourse with the world, begun to question the reality. When I have been for a few days lost in pleasing dissipation, I am always tempted to think that my inquiries have ended in

'error, and that I have suffered much, and suffered it in vain.'

Imlac was delighted to find that the sage's understanding was breaking through its mists, and resolved to detain him from the planets till he should forget his task of ruling them, and reason should recover its original influence.

From this time the astronomer was received into familiar friendship, and partook of all their projects and pleasures: his respect kept him attentive, and the activity of Rasselas did not leave much time unengaged. Something was always to be done; the day was spent in making observations which furnished talk for the evening, and the evening was closed with a scheme for the morrow.

The sage confessed to Imlac, that since he had mingled in the gay tumults of life, and divided his hours by a succession of amusements, he found the conviction of his authority over the skies fade gradually from his mind, and began to trust less to an opinion which he never could prove to others, and which he now found subject to variation, from causes in which reason had no part. 'If I am accidentally left alone for a few hours,' said he, 'my inveterate persuasion rushes upon my soul, and my thoughts are chained down by some irresistible violence; but they are soon disentangled by the prince's conversation, and instantaneously released at the entrance of Pekuah. I am like a man habitually afraid of spectres, who is set at ease by a lamp, and wonders at the dread which harassed him in the dark; yet, if his lamp be extinguished, feels again the terrors which he knows that when it is light he shall feel no more. But I am sometimes afraid lest I indulge my quiet by criminal negligence, and voluntarily forget the great charge with which I am intrusted. If I favour myself in a known error, or am determined by my own ease in a doubtful question of this importance, how dreadful is my crime!'

'No disease of the imagination,' answered Imlac, 'is so difficult of cure, as that which is complicated with the dread of guilt: fancy and conscience then act interchangeably upon us, and so often shift their places, that the illusions of one are not distinguished from the dictates of the other. If fancy presents

‘presents images not moral or religious, the mind drives them away when they give it pain; but when melancholick notions take the form of duty, they lay hold on the faculties without opposition, because we are afraid to exclude or banish them. For this reason the superstitious are often melancholy, and the melancholy almost always superstitious.’

‘But do not let the suggestions of timidity overpower your better reason: the danger of neglect can be but as the probability of the obligation, which when you consider it with freedom, you find very little, and that little growing every day less. Open your heart to the influence of the light, which, from time to time, breaks in upon you: when scruples importune you, which you in your lucid moments know to be vain, do not stand to parley, but fly to business or to Pekuah; and keep this thought always prevalent, that you are only one atom of the mass of humanity, and have neither such virtue nor vice, as that you should be singled out for supernatural favours or afflictions.’

CHAP. XLVI.

THE PRINCE ENTERS, AND BRINGS A NEW TOPICK.

‘ALL this,’ said the astronomer, ‘I have often thought, but my reason has been so long subjugated by an uncontrollable and overwhelming idea, that it durst not confide in its own decisions. I now see how fatally I betrayed my quiet, by suffering chimeras to prey upon me in secret; but melancholy shrinks from communication, and I never found a man before, to whom I could impart my troubles, though I had been certain of relief. I rejoice to find my own sentiments confirmed by yours, who are not easily deceived, and can have no motive or purpose to deceive. I hope that time and variety will dissipate the gloom that has so long surrounded me, and the latter part of my days will be spent in peace.’

‘Your learning and virtue,’ said Imlac, ‘may justly give you hopes.’

Rasselas then entered with the princes and Pekuah, and inquired, whether they

had contrived any new diversion for the next day? ‘Such,’ said Nekayah, ‘is the state of life, that none are happy but by the anticipation of change: the change itself is nothing; when we have made it, the next wish is to change again. The world is not yet exhausted; let me see something to-morrow which I never saw before.’

‘Variety,’ said Rasselas, ‘is so necessary to content, that even the happy valley disgusted me by the recurrence of its luxuries; yet I could not forbear to reproach myself with impatience, when I saw the monks of St. Anthony support, without complaint, a life, not of uniform delight, but uniform hardship.’

‘Those men,’ answered Imlac, ‘are less wretched in their silent convent than the Abissinian princes in their prison of pleasure. Whatever is done by the monks is incited by an adequate and reasonable motive. Their labour supplies them with necessaries; it therefore cannot be omitted, and is certainly rewarded. Their devotion prepares them for another state, and reminds them of its approach, while it fits them for it. Their time is regularly distributed; one duty succeeds another, so that they are not left open to the distraction of unguided choice, nor lost in the shades of listless inactivity. There is a certain task to be performed at an appropriated hour; and their toils are cheerful, because they consider them as acts of piety, by which they are always advancing towards endless felicity.’

‘Do you think,’ said Nekayah, ‘that the monastick rule is a more holy and less imperfect state than any other? May not he equally hope for future happiness who converses openly with mankind, who succours the distressed by his charity, instructs the ignorant by his learning, and contributes by his industry to the general system of life; even though he should omit some of the mortifications which are practised in the cloister, and allow himself such harmless delights as his condition may place within his reach?’

‘This,’ said Imlac, ‘is a question which has long divided the wise, and perplexed the good. I am afraid to decide on either part. He that lives well in the world is better than he that lives well in a monastery. But, perhaps,

haps, every one is not able to stem the temptations of publick-life; and if he cannot conquer, he may properly retreat. Some have little power to do good, and have likewise little strength to resist evil. Many are weary of their conflicts with adversity, and are willing to eject those passions which have long busied them in vain. And many are dismissed by age and diseases from the more laborious duties of society. In monasteries the weak and timorous may be happily sheltered, the weary may repose, and the penitent may meditate. Those retreats of prayer and contemplation have something so congenial to the mind of man, that, perhaps, there is scarcely one that does not purpose to close his life in pious abstraction with a few associates serious as himself.

Such, said Pekuah, 'has often been my wish, and I have heard the princess declare, that she should not willingly die in a crowd.'

'The liberty of using harmless pleasures,' proceeded Imlac, 'will not be disputed; but it is still to be examined what pleasures are harmless. The evil of any pleasure that Nekayah can image is not in the act itself, but in its consequences. Pleasure, in itself harmless, may become mischievous, by endearing to us a state which we know to be transient and probatory, and withdrawing our thoughts from that, of which every hour brings us nearer to the beginning, and of which no length of time will bring us to the end. Mortification is not virtuous in itself, nor has any other use, but that it disengages us from the allurements of sense. In the state of future perfection, to which we all aspire, there will be pleasure without danger, and security without restraint.'

The princess was silent, and Rasselas, turning to the astronomer, asked him, whether he could not delay her retreat, by shewing her something which she had not seen before?

'Your curiosity,' said the sage, 'has been so general, and your pursuit of knowledge so vigorous, that novelties are not now very easily to be found: but what you can no longer procure from the living may be given by the dead. Among the wonders of this country are the catacombs, or the ancient repositories, in which the bodies

of the earliest generations were lodged, and where, by the virtue of the gums which embalmed them, they yet remain without corruption.'

'I know not,' said Rasselas, 'what pleasure the sight of the catacombs can afford; but, since nothing else offered, I am resolved to view them, and shall place this with many other things which I have done, because I would do something.'

They hired a guard of horsemen, and the next day visited the catacombs. When they were about to descend into the sepulchral caves—'Pekuah,' said the princess, 'we are now again invading the habitations of the dead; I know that you will stay behind; let me find you safe when I return.'—'No, I will not be left,' answered Pekuah; 'I will go down between you and the prince.'

They then all descended, and roved with wonder through the labyrinth of subterraneous passages, where the bodies were laid in rows on either side.

C H A P. XLVII.

IMLAC DISCOURSES ON THE NATURE OF THE SOUL.

WHAT reason, said the prince, 'can be given, why the Egyptians should thus expensively preserve those carcases which some nations consume with fire, others lay to mingle with the earth, and all agree to remove from their sight, as soon as decent rites can be performed?'

'The original of ancient customs,' said Imlac, 'is commonly unknown; for the practice often continues when the cause has ceased; and concerning superstitious ceremonies it is vain to conjecture; for what reason did not dictate, reason cannot explain. I have long believed that the practice of embalming arose only from tenderness to the remains of relations or friends, and to this opinion I am more inclined, because it seems impossible that this care should have been general: had all the dead been embalmed, their repositories must in time have been more spacious than the dwellings of the living. I suppose only the rich or honourable were secured from corruption, and the rest left to the course of nature.'

But

‘ But it is commonly supposed that the Egyptians believed the soul to live as long as the body continued undissolved, and therefore tried this method of eluding death.’

‘ Could the wise Egyptians,’ said Nekayah, ‘ think so grossly of the soul? If the soul could once survive its separation, what could it afterwards receive or suffer from the body?’

‘ The Egyptians would doubtless think erroneously,’ said the astronomer, ‘ in the darkness of heathenism, and the first dawn of philosophy. The nature of the soul is still disputed amidst all our opportunities of clearer knowledge: some yet say, that it may be material, who, nevertheless, believe it to be immortal.’

‘ Some,’ answered Imlac, ‘ have indeed said that the soul is material, but I can scarcely believe that any man has thought it, who knew how to think; for all the conclusions of reason enforce the immateriality of mind, and all the notices of sense and investigations of science concur to prove the unconsciousness of matter.’

‘ It was never supposed that cogitation is inherent in matter, or that every particle is a thinking being. Yet, if any part of matter be devoid of thought, what part can we suppose to think? Matter can differ from matter only in form, density, bulk, motion, and direction of motion: to which of these, however varied or combined, can consciousness be annexed? To be round or square, to be solid or fluid, to be great or little, to be moved slowly or swiftly one way or another, are modes of material existence, all equally alien from the nature of cogitation. If matter be once without thought, it can only be made to think by some new modification, but all the modifications which it can admit are equally unconnected with cogitative powers.’

‘ But the materialists,’ said the astronomer, ‘ urge that matter may have qualities with which we are unacquainted.’

‘ He who will determine,’ returned Imlac, ‘ against that which he knows, because there may be something which he knows not; he that can set hypothetical possibility against acknowledged certainty, is not to be admitted among reasonable beings. All

‘ that we know of matter is, that matter is inert, senseless, and lifeless; and if this conviction cannot be opposed but by referring us to something that we know not, we have all the evidence that human intellect can admit. If that which is known may be overruled by that which is unknown, no being, not omniscient, can arrive at certainty.’

‘ Yet let us not,’ said the astronomer, ‘ too arrogantly limit the Creator’s power.’

‘ It is no limitation of omnipotence,’ replied the poet, ‘ to suppose that one thing is not consistent with another, that the same proposition cannot be at once true and false, that the same number cannot be even and odd, that cogitation cannot be conferred on that which is created incapable of cogitation.’

‘ I know not,’ said Nekayah, ‘ any great use of this question. Does that immateriality, which, in my opinion, you have sufficiently proved, necessarily include eternal duration?’

‘ Of immateriality,’ said Imlac, ‘ our ideas are negative, and therefore obscure. Immateriality seems to imply a natural power of perpetual duration as a consequence of exemption from all causes of decay: whatever perishes is destroyed by the solution of its contexture, and separation of its parts; nor can we conceive how that which has no parts, and therefore admits no solution, can be naturally corrupted or impaired.’

‘ I know not,’ said Rasselas, ‘ how to conceive any thing without extension; what is extended must have parts, and you allow, that whatever has parts may be destroyed.’

‘ Consider your own conceptions,’ replied Imlac, ‘ and the difficulty will be less. You will find substance without extension. An ideal form is no less real than material bulk: yet an ideal form has no extension. It is no less certain, when you think on a pyramid, that your mind possesses the idea of a pyramid, than that the pyramid itself is standing. What space does the idea of a pyramid occupy more than the idea of a grain of corn? or how can either idea suffer laceration? As is the effect, such is the cause: as thought, such is the power that thinks; a power impassive and indiscernible.’

‘But the Being,’ said Nekayah, ‘whom I fear to name, the Being which made the soul, can destroy it.’

‘He, surely, can destroy it,’ answered Imlac, ‘since, however unperishable, it receives from a superiour nature it’s power of duration. That it will not perish by any inherent cause of decay, or principle of corruption, may be shewn by philosophy; but philosophy can tell no more. That it will not be annihilated by him that made it, we must humbly learn from higher authority.’

The whole assembly stood awhile silent and collected. ‘Let us return,’ said Rasselas, ‘from this scene of mortality. How gloomy would be these mansions of the dead to him who did not know that he should never die; that what now acts shall continue it’s agency, and what now thinks shall think on for ever! Those that lie here stretched before us, the wise and the powerful of ancient times, warn us to remember the shortness of our present state: they were, perhaps, snatched away while they were busy like us in the choice of life.’

‘To me,’ said the princess, ‘the choice of life is become less important; I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity.’

They then hastened out of the caverns, and, under the protection of their guard, returned to Cairo.

C H A P. XLVIII.

THE CONCLUSION, IN WHICH NOTHING IS CONCLUDED.

IT was now the time of the inundation of the Nile: a few days after their visit to the catacombs, the river began to rise.

They were confined to their house. The whole region being under water gave them no invitation to any excursions, and, being well supplied with materials for talk, they diverted themselves with comparisons of the different forms of life which they had observed, and with various schemes of happiness which each of them had formed.

Pekuah was never so much charmed with any place as the convent of St. Anthony, where the Arab restored her to the princess, and wished only to fill it with pious maidens, and to be made prioress of the order: she was weary of expectation and disgust, and would gladly be fixed in some unvariable state.

The princess thought, that of all sublunary things, knowledge was the best: she desired first to learn all sciences, and then purposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside, that, by conversing with the old, and educating the young, she might divide her time between the acquisition and communication of wisdom, and raise up for the next age models of prudence, and patterns of piety.

The prince desired a little kingdom, in which he might administer justice in his own person, and see all the parts of government with his own eyes; but he could never fix the limits of his dominion, and was always adding to the number of his subjects.

Imlac and the astronomer were contented to be driven along the stream of life, without directing their course to any particular port.

Of these wishes that they had formed, they well knew that none could be obtained. They deliberated awhile what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abissinia.

FINIS.



HENRIETTA.

BY MRS. LENNOX.

IN TWO VOLUMES.



L O N D O N :

Printed for HARRISON and Co. N^o 18, Paternoster Row.

M DCC LXXXVII.



Dedication to the Second Edition.

TO HER GRACE

THE DUTCHESS OF NEWCASTLE.

MADAM,

THE condescension and benignity with which your Grace has hitherto favoured my performances and attempts, have at last given me boldness enough to intreat your patronage for a little novel.

Those to whom this book is new, will expect the name of such a patroness to be followed by some work of deep research and elevated dignity; but they whose nearer approaches to your Grace, have enabled them to distinguish your private virtues, will not be disappointed when they find it recommended only by purity and innocence. To obtain the approbation of a judgment like yours, it is necessary to mean well; and, to gain kindness from such benevolence, to mean well is commonly sufficient.

Had your Grace resolved only to countenance those who could have enlarged your knowledge, or refined your sentiments, few could have aspired to the honour of your notice, and far had I been removed from all hope of the favours which I have enjoyed, and the expectations which I have been permitted to indulge. But true greatness is always accessible, and pride will never be confounded with dignity by those who remember that your Grace has admitted this address from,

MADAM,

Your Grace's most obliged,

And most devoted Servant,

CHARLOTTE LENNOX.

LONDON,
Nov. 20, 1760.

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HENRIETTA.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAP. I.

WHICH INTRODUCES OUR HEROINE
TO THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE
READER IN NO VERY ADVANTA-
GEOUS SITUATION.

BOUT the middle of July, 17—, when the Windsor stage-coach with the accustomed number of passengers was proceeding on its way to London, a young woman genteelly dressed, with a small parcel tied up in her handkerchief, hastily bolted from the shelter of a large tree near the road; and calling to the coachman to stop for a moment, asked him, if he could let her have a place. The man, although he well knew his vehicle was already sufficiently crowded, yet being desirous of appropriating this super-numerary fare to himself, replied, that he did not doubt but he could find room for her; and, jumping off his box, begged the company to sit close, and give the young woman a place.

‘What do you mean?’ said a jolly fat woman, with a face as red as scarlet; ‘Have you not got your usual number of passengers? Do you think we will be stifled with heat to put money into your pocket?’—‘There is room enough for such a slender young body as this,’ said the coachman, ‘if you would but sit closer.’

‘Sit closer!’ repeated the dame, and spreading her cloaths; ‘don’t you see we are crowded to death? How dare you pretend to impose another passenger upon us, when your coach is already full?’

‘Well,’ said a tall lean woman, who sat next her, ‘this is the first time I ever travelled in a stage coach, and truly I am sick of it already. There is no bearing the insults one is exposed to in these carriages. Prithee, young woman,’ pursued she, with an air of great contempt, ‘go about your business, you see there is no room for you—And do you, fellow, get on your box, and drive on.’

‘Fellow me no fellows,’ said the coachman, in a surly tone, ‘I won’t drive till I please. Who are you, pray, that takes so much upon you to order me?’

‘Who am I, you saucy jack-a-napes,’ said the lady, ‘a person that—but I shall not demean myself so much as to tell you who I am: it is my misfortune to be stuffed up in a stage-coach at present—what I have never been used to, I assure you.’

‘Good lack-a-day!’ said the fat gentlewoman, with a sneer, ‘a great misfortune truly—I would have you to know, Madam, your betters ride in stage coaches. Here’s a coil indeed with such would-be-gentry!’

‘Good woman,’ said the other, with an affected calmness, ‘pray don’t direct your

'your impertinent discourse to me; I have nothing to say to you.'

'No more a good woman than yourself,' said the plump lady, with a face doubly inflamed with rage; 'I scorn your words.'

'Very likely,' said a grave man, who sat on the opposite side, 'but I wish it was possible to make room for the young gentleman.'—'Ah! God bless your honour,' said the coachman, 'I thought you could not find in your heart to let such a pretty young woman as this walk.'

'Pretty!' exclaimed the haughty lady, 'you are a fine judge of beauty indeed!—But I will not submit to be crowded, fellow: so you and your pretty passenger may ride on the coach-box, if you please.'

'Nay, since you come to that,' says the fat gentleman, 'I am resolved you shall not have your own way. The young woman may be as good as you; and she shall not be obliged to ride on the coach-box. So open the door, coachman,' said she, shoving her antagonist at the same time with all her force; 'here is room enough.'

A young gentlewoman in a riding-habit, who sat on the same side, but next the window, declared that she was willing to give part of her seat to the stranger; and begged the haughty lady to yield.

'Poh!' said the rosy man, 'don't stand begging and plying her; since you are on my side, we will be too hard for her, I warrant you.' Saying this, she put one of her huge arms round the young woman's waist; and thus reinforced, shoved her neighbour so forcibly against the other window, that she cried out with pain and vexation.

The young lady without, who had been the occasion of this contest, and who had hitherto stood silent, with her hat over her eyes, alarmed by the screams of her foe, raised her head; and in a tone of voice so sweet, as immediately fixed the attention of the whole company, intreated them not to quarrel upon her account: It was indeed, she said, of great consequence to her to be admitted, but she would not continue to desire it, since her request had produced so much uneasiness among them.

The passengers who occupied the other side of the coach, were two men and a woman big with child; which circumstance had made it impossible for the men

to offer her a seat with them, for fear of incommoding the pregnant woman. But the youngest of the men having now got a glimpse of the stranger's face, declared that the ladies might make themselves easy, for he would resign his seat; adding, that he was extremely glad he had an opportunity of obliging such a handsome lady. He then jumped out of the coach, and taking the stranger's hand to help her in, stared confidently under her hat, which put her into a little confusion: however, she thanked him very politely, and accepted his offer, but not without expressing some concern for the manner in which he would dispose of himself.

'Oh! Madam,' said the coachman, 'the gentleman may sit upon the box with me, and he will have the pleasure of viewing the beautiful prospects all the way we go.'—'I shall see none so beautiful,' said the young fellow, 'as what they who remain in the coach will behold.'

The fair stranger now blushed more than before, and being willing to avoid any farther speeches of this sort, she hastily got into the coach, thanked the young man a second time, who having seen her seated, placed himself by the coachman on the box, and they proceeded on their journey.

CHAP. II.

THE COMMENCEMENT OF A VIOLENT FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN TWO YOUNG LADIES, WHICH HAS THE USUAL CONSEQUENCES, A COMMUNICATION OF SECRETS, BY WHICH THE READER IS LET INTO PART OF HENRIETTA'S STORY.

A Profound silence now prevailed among the company in the coach; the eyes of all were fastened upon the fair stranger, who appeared wholly insensible of the scrutinizing looks of her fellow-travellers. Something within herself seemed to engross all her thoughts; and although, by her eyes being constantly turned towards the windows of the coach, it might be imagined the passing objects drew her attention, yet their fixed looks too plainly indicated that they were beheld without observation. Her person, though full of charms, and the easy gracefulness of her air, im-

pressed less respect for her on the minds of the women, than the elegance of her morning-dress, which they were now at leisure to consider. Her gown was a white sprigged muslin, extremely fine, through which shone a rich blue Mantua silk petticoat: her cap, handkerchief, and ruffles, were trimmed with fine Brussels lace; her apron had a broad border round it of Dresden work; and a white lutestring hat shaded her charming face, which she was solicitous to conceal from view.

The melancholy with which she seemed oppressed, conciliated to her the goodwill of her female fellow-travellers, though from very different sentiments. The haughty lady, who had refused to let her have a place in the coach, found her envy and ill-nature insensibly subside, by the consideration that this stranger was probably more unhappy than herself.

The lusty matron, pleased that, by insisting upon receiving her, she had conferred an obligation on one who appeared to be of a rank above her own, enjoyed her present superiority, and pitied her from the overflowings of gratified pride.

The young lady in the riding-habit, whose vanity had been a little mortified at seeing herself associated in a journey with persons whom she conceived to be very unfit company for her, thought herself very happy in the acquisition of so genteel a fellow-traveller; and as she had not deigned to open her mouth before, from an opinion of the meanness of her company, she now made herself amends for her silence, by addressing a profusion of civil speeches to the fair stranger, who replied to every thing she said with extreme politeness, but with an air that shewed her heart was not at ease.

The passengers being set down at different places, Miss Courteney, for that was the name of our fair adventurer, remained alone with the young lady in the coach. This circumstance seemed to rouse her from a deep reverie, in which she had been wholly absorbed during the last half hour; and looking earnestly at her companion—'Ah! Madam,' said she, in a most affecting accent, 'and when am I to lose you?'—'I shall leave you in a few minutes,' said the lady; 'for I am going no farther than Hammer-smith.'—'Lord bless me!' said Miss Courteney, lifting up her fine

eyes swimming in tears, 'what shall I do? what will become of me?'

This exclamation gave great surprize to the other lady, who from several circumstances had conceived that there was some mystery in her case. 'You seem uneasy,' said she to Miss Courteney; 'pray let me know if it is in my power to serve you.'

This kind request had such an effect on the tender heart of Miss Courteney, that she burst into tears, and for a few moments was unable to answer; when the lady pressing her to speak freely—'I am an unhappy creature, Madam,' said she, sighing; 'and am flying from the only person in the world upon whom I have any dependence. I will make no scruple to trust you with my secret. Did you ever hear of Lady Meadows,' pursued she, 'the widow of Sir John Meadows?'

'I know a lady who is acquainted with her,' said the other; 'she is a woman of fashion and fortune.'

'Lady Meadows is my relation,' resumed Miss Courteney; 'she took me, a poor helpless orphan, under her protection, and during some time treated me with the tenderness of a mother. Within these few weeks I have unhappily lost her favour, not by any fault of mine, I assure you, for I have always loved and revered her. Nothing should have obliged me to take this step, which has no doubt an appearance of ingratitude, but the fear of being forced to marry a man I hate.'

'O heavens! my dear creature,' exclaimed the lady in an affected tone, 'what do you tell me! were you upon the point of being forced to a detested match?'—'Yes, Madam,' replied Miss Courteney; 'and to this hard lot was I doomed by her to whom I owe all my past happiness, and from whom I expected all the future.'

'You have obliged me excessively by this unreserved confidence,' interrupted the lady; 'and you shall find me not unworthy of it. From this moment I swear to you an inviolable attachment. Sure there is nothing so transporting as friendship and mutual confidence! You won my heart the moment I saw you. I have formed a hundred violent friendships, but one accident or other always dissolved them in a short time. There are very few persons

persons that are capable of a violent friendship; at least, I never could find one that answered my ideas of that sort of engagement. Have not you been often disappointed? Tell me, my dear: I dare say you have. Your sentiments, I believe, are as delicate as mine upon this head: I am charmed, I am ravished with this meeting! Who would have imagined that by chance, and in a stage-coach, I should have found what I have so earnestly sought for these three months, a person with whom I could contract a violent friendship, such as minds like ours are only capable of feeling?

'I am extremely obliged to you, Madam, for your good opinion,' said Miss Courteney; 'I hope I shall never be so unfortunate as to forfeit it; indeed I have reason to think that, in my present distressed situation, a friend is a blessing sent from heaven.'

'Well! but my dear Clelia,' said this flighty lady, 'you have not told me all your story. I call you Clelia, because you know it is so like common acquaintance to address one another by the title of Miss Such-a-one—Romantick names give a spirit to the correspondence between such friends as you and I are: but perhaps you may like another name better than Clelia; though I think that is a mighty pretty one, so soft and gliding, Clelia, Clelia—tell me, do you like it, my dear?'

'Call me what you please,' said Miss Courteney, smiling a little at the singularity of her new friend; 'but my name is Courteney.'

'Courteney is a very pretty surname,' said the lady; 'I hope it is not disgraced with any odious vulgar Christian name, such as Molly, or Betty, or the like.'

'I was christened Henrietta, after my mother,' said Miss Courteney. 'Henrietta is well enough,' returned the other; 'but positively, my dear, you must assume the name of Clelia when you write to me; for we must correspond every hour. Oh! what a ravishing pleasure it is to indulge the overflowings of one's heart upon paper! Remember to call me Celinda in your letters; and in all our private conversations, we shall have a thousand secrets to communicate to each other. But I am impatient to know all your story; it must needs be very romantick and pretty.'

'Alas!' said the charming Henrietta, 'this is no time to talk of my misfortunes; we are entered into Hammer-smith, and there you say you must leave me: give me your advice, dear Madam; tell me in what manner I must dispose of myself.'

'Dear Madam!' repeated the lady, 'is that the style then you resolve to use? have you forgot that we have contracted a violent friendship, and that I am your Celinda, and you my Clelia?'

'I beg your pardon,' said Henrietta; 'I did not think of that name. Well, then, dear Celinda, what would you advise me to do? I am going to London, there to conceal myself from the search that Lady Meadows will doubtless make for me when she hears I have left her house: all my hope of a reconciliation with her is through the interposition of a friend. I have a brother, who has been abroad several years, and whom I every day expect to hear is arrived; but I dare not show myself to any of Lady Meadows's acquaintance, lest I should be hurried back, and sacrificed to what she calls my interest. I know so little of the town, that I am afraid I may take up my residence in an improper house, among people where my honour, or at least my reputation, may be in danger. Direct me, dear Madam—my dear Celinda, I would say—direct me what to do in this dreadful dilemma.' Here she paused, anxiously expecting the answer of her new friend, which will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. III.

WHICH ILLUSTRATES AN OBSERVATION OF ROCHEFOUCAULT'S, THAT IN THE MISFORTUNES OF OUR FRIENDS THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING THAT DOES NOT DISPLEASE US.

'I Protest, my dearest Clelia,' said the lady, 'your fears are very natural upon this occasion. I should in your situation be almost distracted. Even our parents watchful cares are hardly sufficient to guard us against the attempts of insolent men: how much more then are those attempts to be dreaded, when we are left defenceless and exposed! Believe me, my dear, I sympathize

'sympathize truly with you in this misfortune. Good Heaven! I think I should die with apprehension were I in your case.'

'Don't terrify me,' said Miss Courteney, trembling. 'I have taken an imprudent step, but I must make the best of it now: Providence, I hope, will be my guard.'

'I would not terrify you, my dear,' said the lady; 'but I must repeat, that were I in your case, I think my fears would distract me. Thank Heaven! I am protected by watchful parents, cautious relations, and prudent friends; yet hardly thus can I think myself secure from those enterprising wretches the men.'

This young lady had indeed a stronger protector than all these, which she did not mention, or perhaps was insensible of; and that was the extreme disagreeableness of her whole person. Her features, it is true, could not be called irregular, because few faces were ever distinguished with a set more uniformly bad. Her complexion, which was a composition of green and yellow, was marvellously well suited to her features. Nor was it possible to make any invidious comparisons between her face and her shape, since it was hard to decide which was worst.

Miss Courteney, who had burst into tears, occasioned by her reflections on her own helpless situation, compared with the advantages her friend enjoyed, and which she had so ostentatiously enumerated, was upon the point of soliciting her advice again; when the lady joyfully exclaimed—'Oh! there is my aunt's house, my dear Clelia, we must part immediately.'

'Sure,' said Henrietta, sighing, 'you will not leave me till you have advised me what to do.'

'Lord! my dear,' said the other, 'one young creature is not qualified to give another advice upon such occasions. I wish it was in my power to give you proper advice; you know I have vowed to you an inviolable friendship. And—'

Here the coachman, as he had been directed, stopped before a large handsome house; and a well-dressed footman immediately appearing, came forwards to open the coach-door.

'Hear me one word,' cried Miss Courteney, perceiving this tender friend

was actually going to leave her without any farther solicitude for her safety—

'upon the strength of that inviolable friendship you have vowed to me, I will venture to ask a favour of you: it is,' pursued she, 'that you will recommend me to some person of your acquaintance in London, who may direct me to a decent house, where I can remain in safety till my brother's arrival.'

'I vow this is a lucky thought!' said the lady; 'I believe I can serve you, my dear Clelia; but you must step in with me to my aunt's.—John,' said she to the servant, 'is my aunt at home?' The man told her his lady was just gone to take an airing.

'That's well,' said the lady; 'we shall have an opportunity to settle this matter: but, my dear Clelia, I think it will be best to discharge the coach, the fellow possibly will not wait. I'll send my aunt's servant to take a place for you in the Hammer Smith stage, which I know does not set out this half hour.'

Henrietta readily complied, overjoyed that she had really found a sincere friend in the person of this whimsical lady; who, having led her into a large well-furnished parlour, ordered some tea to be brought, and then told her, that she would give her a letter to her milliner, who was a very good sort of a woman, and where she might depend upon being absolutely safe.

'When I was last in town,' pursued she, 'which was about three weeks ago, her first floor was empty; and in this season of the year, I believe, she will let it to you for two guineas a week.'

'A single room will do for me,' said Miss Courteney; 'my circumstances do not entitle me to magnificent lodgings, and my business is to keep myself private.'

'Well, well, my dear, be that as you please,' said the other; 'I will write the letter without mentioning what lodgings you require.' Saying this, she called for pens and paper; and having wrote the following billet, gave it to Miss Courteney for her perusal.

'DEAR MRS. EGRET,

'THE lady who will deliver you this, is one for whom I have the most violent friendship imaginable. You know how ardent my friendships are; but I think I never had any so

'firmly rooted as this, though our acquaintance commenced but a few hours ago. This dear friend having desired me to recommend her to some person to lodge with, I thought of you, knowing you can accommodate her with genteel apartments. I am, dear Mrs. Egret, your humble servant,

'E. WOODBY.'

Henrietta having read the letter, returned it again into the hands of her friend, gratefully acknowledging the favour, although she had some objections to it; for she did not approve of the words *Genteel Apartments*, being resolved not to exceed a very moderate price: but she rightly conceived that Miss Woodby rather listened to her own pride than her convenience, by throwing in that circumstance, and therefore took no notice of it.

The letter being sealed and directed, Miss Courteney carefully deposited it in her pocket; and the two ladies were preparing to drink their tea, when the footman entered, and said the stage-coach was just going off: our fair traveller instantly rose up, and took leave of her friend, who having prevailed upon her to drink a glass of sack and water, since she was disappointed of her tea, parted from her with an affectionate embrace, and a promise that she would see her in town very shortly.

Miss Courteney finding only one passenger in the coach, who was a grave elderly woman, resumed her journey with some kind of cheerfulness, having thus happily got over her apprehensions of falling into bad company, where chance might have directed her to lodge,

CHAP. IV.

IN WHICH OUR HEROINE, THROUGH INATTENTION, FALLS INTO THE VERY DIFFICULTY SHE HAD TAKEN SUCH PAINS TO AVOID.

BUT this cessation from uneasiness did not last long: for the mind which can fasten with violence but upon one circumstance of distress at a time; and being suddenly relieved from that, is sensible of a calm, which, compared with it's former feelings, may be called pleasure, soon selects another object to engross it's attention, and fixes on it with

equal anxiety and solicitude. Thus it fared with our lovely heroine, whose other cares had all been swallowed up in reflections on the danger to which her honour was exposed. Eased of these apprehensions by the good offices of Miss Woodby, she was happy for a few moments, till the consequences of her flight rushed full upon her mind: Lady Meadows's favour irrecoverable; her fortune ruined; her reputation blasted. This last thought, which, from the delicacy of her sentiments, gave her the deepest regret, dwelt most upon her mind; and, forgetting that she was not alone, she clasped her hands together in a violent emotion, and burst into tears.

The old gentlewoman, who had been eyeing her very attentively, not a little surprised at the seriousness that appeared in the looks and behaviour of so young a creature, eagerly asked her what was the matter.

Henrietta, roused by this question, which (so absent had she been) first informed her she was observed, wiped her eyes, and composing her countenance, said she was often low-spirited.

'Don't tell me of low spirits,' said the old gentlewoman; 'such young bodies as you are not low-spirited for nothing. What! I warrant you, there is a sweet heart in the case?'

'Oh! no Madam,' said Miss Courteney, blushing, 'no sweetheart, I assure you.'

'No, really?' resumed she; 'well, then, I suppose you have lost a friend.'

'I have indeed lost a friend,' said the young lady, hoping that acknowledgment would put an end to the questions of her fellow-traveller.

'Indeed!' said the old woman; 'and this friend—is it a father, or mother, or sister, or—'

'All, all,' interrupted Miss Courteney, bursting again into tears.

'How all?' repeated the old woman, 'Have you just now lost all these kins-folks?'

'I lost them all in losing that friend,' Madam, said Henrietta; vexed that her sensibility, awakened by such questions, had made her too little guarded in her expressions.

'Oh, oh, I understand you, child,' said the good gentlewoman: 'this person, I don't ask you whether it was a man or woman, was to you both father and mother. Well, and so I suppose

pose you have just heard of the death of this good friend, and are going to town on that occasion?

Miss Courteney, finding that the inquisitive temper of her fellow-traveller was likely to lead her into a discovery of her situation, chose rather to be silent than violate truth, by feigning circumstances to deceive her; and, fortunately for her, she was prevented from suffering more disagreeable interrogatories, by the coach's suddenly stopping at an inn in Piccadilly, where it put up.

The old gentlewoman, however, at parting, asked her what part of the town she was going to, and offered, if it was in her way, to accompany her; but Henrietta evaded the question and the offer, by telling her, that she intended to take a chair. The coachman accordingly called one for her, which she entered immediately; and being asked by the chairman where she would please to be carried, she recollected, with great confusion, that Miss Woodby had not told her where her milliner lived.

She now sought for the letter, hoping there was a full direction upon that. But what was her grief and perplexity, when she found the superscription contained only these words—'For Mrs. Egret!' 'Good Heaven!' exclaimed the fair unfortunate, 'what shall I do now?'

The chairman repeating his question, she told him that she had forgot a direction, and asked him if he knew where Mrs. Egret, a milliner, lived. The fellow replied in the negative; but added, that he would enquire. He accordingly stepped into the nearest shop, which was a haberdasher's; and making a small blunder in the name, which the person he spoke to mistook for Eccles, he was told, that the milliner for whom he enquired lived in Charles Street.

The fellow returned, extremely pleased with his success, and relieved the young lady from her anxiety, who bid him carry her directly to Charles Street; and she soon found herself at the door of a milliner's shop; where she discharged her chairmen; and entering, asked a young woman, whom she saw at work, if her mistress was at home.

The girl desired her to walk into a parlour, where she was met by an agreeable well dressed woman, who received her with great politeness, and desired to know her commands.

'I have a letter for you,' said Hen-

rietta, putting it into her hands, 'from a young lady, a customer of yours; the contents will acquaint you with my business.'

The milliner took the letter, and having read it, returned it again with a smile, saying, she was not the person to whom it was addressed.

'Not Madam,' said Miss Courteney, excessively surprized; 'is not your name Egret?'

'My name is Eccles, Madam,' said the milliner. 'Bless me!' cried Miss Courteney, 'the chairmen have made a mistake: I bid one of them enquire where Mrs. Egret, a milliner, lived, and he was directed hither. I shall be obliged to you,' pursued Henrietta, 'if you will let your maid call a chair.'

'To be sure, Madam,' said the milliner; 'but do you not know where this Mrs. Egret lives?'

'I have unfortunately forgot to get a direction,' returned the young lady; 'but I hope you can inform me.'

'I wish I could, Madam,' said the milliner; 'but really I know no such person as Mrs. Egret.'—'Surely I am the most unfortunate creature in the world!' cried Henrietta.

'I hope not, Madam,' said Mrs. Eccles, with a look of great complacency; 'there are more persons, besides Mrs. Egret, who would be glad to accommodate you with lodgings. I wish mine were good enough for you.'

'Oh! they are good enough, no doubt,' replied Miss Courteney; 'but I was recommended to Mrs. Egret, and——' 'Pray, Madam, walk up, and look at my first floor,' said Mrs. Eccles; and, without waiting for any reply, immediately led the way.

Henrietta followed in such perplexity of mind, that she hardly knew what she did; and, while the officious milliner led her from room to room, expatiating at large upon the conveniences, she continued silent, revolving in her thoughts the dilemma to which she was reduced.

The evening was so far advanced, that she could not think of going in quest of Mrs. Egret, of whom she could get no information here; yet she was not able to resolve upon taking lodgings in the house of a person to whom she was an absolute stranger: a misfortune which she had vainly endeavoured to avoid by the application she had made to Miss Woodby.

'I am afraid you don't like this apartment,'

'apartment, Madam,' said Mrs. Eccles, who observed her look pensive and uneasy. 'I have no objection to it,' said Miss Courteney, 'but that it is rather too good. I do not propose to go to a high price; a bed-chamber, and the use of a parlour, will be sufficient for me.'

The milliner looked a little dissatisfied at these words, but told her she could accommodate her with a large handsome bed-chamber up two pair of stairs; but added, that she had no other parlour than that which she kept for her own use.

Miss Courteney desired to see the room, which was indeed very handsome and convenient; and the milliner perceiving she liked it, told her, that she should be welcome to the use of the dining-room till her first floor was lett.

The young lady thought this an obliging proposal; and, being pleased with the woman's countenance and behaviour, ventured to make an agreement with her; and every thing being settled upon very easy terms—'There is but one difficulty remaining,' said she, with an engaging smile, 'and that I know not how we shall get over; we are strangers to each other.'

'Oh, Madam,' interrupted Mrs. Eccles, 'though it is not my custom to take in lodgers without having a character, yet I can have no scruple with regard to a lady of your appearance. As for me, I have lived a great many years in this neighbourhood, and am not afraid of having my character enquired into.'

She spoke this with a little warmth, which made Henrietta imagine she expected the same kind of confidence she had shewn: so, making a merit of necessity, she appeared very well satisfied, and immediately took possession of her new apartment.

CHAP. V.

WHICH CONTAINS NOTHING BUT
VERY COMMON OCCURRENCES.

MRS. Eccles being summoned into her shop by a customer, Miss Courteney desired her to send up pen, ink, and paper, being resolved to write to Miss Woodby that night, and acquaint her with the disappointment she had met with. The maid soon

appeared with candles, and all the materials for writing; delivering, at the same time, her mistress's compliments to the young lady, and a request that she would favour her with her company to supper. Miss Courteney promised to wait on her, provided she was alone; and, sitting down, wrote the following letter to her new friend.

'YOU will, no doubt, my dear Miss Woodby, be both surprised and grieved to know that your kind intentions have been frustrated; and that, by forgetting to give me a direction, your recommendation to Mrs. Egret has proved useless to me. By a mistake of the chairman, who I desired to enquire where Mrs. Egret lived, I was brought to another milliner's; and she not being able to direct me where to find her, I am obliged to take up my lodging with a stranger. It was my apprehensions of what has befallen me, that induced me to trust you with my secret, a secret of the highest importance to me; and most generously did you repay my confidence by your ready assistance. It was my ill fortune which ordered it so, that I should not profit by your kindness. However, my gratitude is equally engaged; and, since I observe nothing disagreeable in the behaviour of the person in whose house I now am, I shall endeavour to make myself easy till I hear from you. I long to see you, to tell you my unhappy story, to have your compassion, or rather to be justified by your approbation of what I have been compelled by circumstances to do. Oh! my dear Miss, how unhappy is that mind, which, with right intentions, feels a consciousness of something wrong in its resolutions! Direct for me by the name of Benson, at Mrs. Eccles's, milliner, in Charles Street. Adieu. I sign the pretty name you gave me.'

'CLELIA.'

Henrietta had just sealed her letter, when somebody tapped at her door; she opened it immediately, and seeing Mrs. Eccles, asked her pardon for not waiting on her before. Mrs. Eccles told her, that her little supper being ready, she came to see if she was at leisure.

Miss Courteney found the cloth spread in the parlour, and an elegant supper was served

served up. Mrs Eccles did not fail to apologize frequently for the meanness of her entertainment, and was gratified with as many assurances from her fair guest, that no apology was necessary. During the repast, Mrs. Eccles entertained her with an account of the newest fashions, the most celebrated performers of the opera and playhouses, little pieces of scandal, and the like topics of conversation, which Henrietta had often heard discussed among her more polite acquaintance; and, indeed, almost the only ones that engage the attention during the recesses of the card-table.

The milliner then turning the discourse to the accident that procured her so agreeable a lodger, artfully pursued her hints, till the young lady found herself obliged to satisfy, in some degree, her curiosity concerning her situation.

Though she was naturally communicative, even to a fault, yet she did not think proper to disclose herself farther, than to tell her, that she had been obliged to come to London upon some affairs of consequence, which could not be settled till the arrival of her brother, who was every day expected from his travels.

This account was so near the truth, that Miss Courteney, in the simplicity of her own heart, thought it could not fail of being believed. However, the milliner, who knew the world very well, conceived there was something extraordinary in the case—nothing less than a love-intrigue: nor did this suspicion give her any uneasiness. She was one of those convenient persons with whom a lady, upon paying a certain sum of money, might lie in privately, and be properly attended. She made no scruple of accommodating with lodgings a young wife, whose husband, for certain family reasons, visits her only now and then; and as she generally found her account in such sort of lodgers, she seldom desired, and indeed was seldom incumbered, with any other.

The youth, beauty, and elegance of Miss Courteney, the introductory letter so oddly conceived, her apparent perplexity and concern upon her disappointment of the lodgings she had expected, raised suspicions, which the story she now heard confirmed; and not doubting but this affair would prove beneficial to her, she exerted her utmost endeavours to please her fair lodger, and engage her to an entire confidence.

When the clock struck eleven, Henrietta rose up, in order to retire to her own chamber, to which Mrs. Eccles officiously attended her. Having taken leave of her at the door, she bolted it on the inside; and, after recommending herself to the protection of Heaven, went to bed, but not to rest. A thousand disquietudes kept her waking till the morning, when she sunk into a slumber that lasted till eleven o'clock.

As soon as she opened her eyes, she was informed, by the strong light in her chamber, that the morning was far advanced; and finding by her watch, which lay on a chair near her bed-side, how much she had exceeded her usual time, (for she was a very early riser) she hurried on her cloaths, and went down stairs, being extremely anxious to get her letter sent to Miss Woodby: she went directly into the shop, supposing she should find Mrs. Eccles there; but was excessively surprised to hear from the apprentice, that her mistress was not yet up.

'I suppose,' said Miss Courteney, 'she rested no better than myself last night, which was the cause of my lying so late this morning.'

'Lal Ma'am,' replied the girl, 'my mistress is never up before eleven or twelve.'—'Indeed!' said the young lady, dissembling her concern at a circumstance which gave her no favourable opinion of her landlady. 'But, Madam,' added the girl, 'you may have your breakfast whenever you please to order it.' She then called the maid, whom Miss Courteney ordered to fetch a porter; being determined to have her letter delivered into Miss Woodby's own hands, if possible. A porter was soon found, who undertook to carry the letter to Hammer-smith, as directed; and this affair being dispatched, Henrietta ordered some chocolate for her breakfast, and retired to her own chamber.

CH A P. VI.

IN WHICH MISS WOODEY AGAIN
MAKES HER APPEARANCE.

IN about a quarter of an hour, Mrs. Eccles appeared in a long loose linen sack, being her morning dress, and insisted upon Miss Courteney's breakfasting with her; who at length consented, having agreed to pay at the rate of a guinea

guinea a week for her board, during the time she stayed, which she only determined should not be long.

After the tea-things were removed, she went into the shop to make a purchase of some ribbands and gloves; and while she was amusing herself with looking over a great variety of fashionable trifles, which the apprentice officiously shewed her, a young gentleman, who had been attracted by her appearance, came into the shop, and asked to look at some Dresden ruffles. Henrietta, blushing at the earnestness with which he gazed on her, retired immediately, telling Mrs. Eccles, as she passed through the parlour, that there was a gentleman in the shop. The milliner, upon this information, lifted up her hands mechanically to her head to adjust her hair, and hastened to attend her customer; while her fair lodger, taking a book that lay in the window, went to her apartment, with an intention to amuse herself with reading till the longed-for return of her messenger.

The book, however, which was a volume of the *New Atalantis*, did not suit her taste; she threw it away, and abandoned herself to her own melancholy reflections, which were at length interrupted by her landlady, who entered the room with a smiling air, telling her, she had had a very good customer.

‘I am glad of it,’ said Henrietta.

‘Truly,’ said Mrs. Eccles, ‘I believe I am obliged to your fair face for my good luck this morning.’—‘How!’ returned the young lady, with a countenance graver than before.

‘Nay, never wonder at it,’ said Mrs. Eccles; ‘the gentleman laid out twelve guineas with me; but I don’t believe he wanted the things he bought. You were the loadstone,’ added she smartly, ‘that drew him into the shop. He asked me a hundred questions about you.’

‘I am sorry for it,’ said Miss Courteney; ‘I wish I had not been in the shop.’—‘And why sorry, pray?’ resumed Mrs. Eccles; ‘I warrant you are sorry you are handsome too. However, I have another thing to tell you, to increase your sorrow, and that is, that you have certainly made a conquest of this fine spark; and, to overwhelm you with affliction,’ pursued she, laughing, ‘I verily believe he is a man of quality.’

‘Do you know him, then?’ said Miss

Courteney, who could not help smiling a little at her vivacity.

‘I only judge by his appearance and manners,’ replied Mrs. Eccles, ‘that he is a man of rank; but I dare say, we shall hear more from him.’—‘Sure,’ Mrs. Eccles!’ interrupted Miss Courteney, with some emotion.

‘Nay, nay, child,’ exclaimed Mrs. Eccles, ‘don’t put yourself into a flurry; I don’t know that I shall ever see him again.—But, pray, what book have you got here?’—‘One I found in your parlour,’ said Miss Courteney. ‘Oh, I see what it is,’ cried Mrs. Eccles, opening it; ‘it is a charming pretty book. If you love reading, Miss, I can furnish you with books; I have a very pretty collection.’—‘I should be glad to see your collection,’ said the young lady, who was apprehensive of her renewing a conversation that had been very disagreeable to her.

Mrs. Eccles immediately led her into a little-room on the same floor, and opening a closet, in which there were about two dozen books ranged on a shelf, she bid her take her choice, for there was variety enough.

Henrietta soon examined the so much boasted collection, which she found chiefly consisted of novels and plays. ‘Well,’ said Mrs. Eccles, ‘how do you like my books? are they not prettily chosen?’

‘I assure you,’ replied she, taking down one, ‘you chose very well when you chose this; for it is one of the most exquisite pieces of humour in our language.’—‘I knew you would approve of my taste,’ said Mrs. Eccles, ‘but what have you got? Oh! the *Adventures of Joseph Andrews*. Yes; that is a very pretty book, to be sure!—but there is Mrs. Haywood’s *Novels*, did you ever read them? Oh! they are the finest love-sick, passionate stories; I assure you, you’ll like them vastly; pray, take a volume of Haywood upon my recommendation.’—‘Excuse me,’ said Henrietta, ‘I am very well satisfied with what I have; I have read this book three times already, and yet I assure you, I shall begin it again with as much eagerness and delight as I did at first.’

‘Well, as you please,’ said Mrs. Eccles, leaving her at the door of her own chamber; ‘I won’t disturb you till dinner is ready.’

Miss

Miss Courteney sat down to her book, which agreeably engaged her attention, till she was interrupted with the pleasing news of her porter's being returned: she flew down stairs; he delivered her a letter, the seal of which she eagerly broke, and found it as follows.

CELINDA TO HER DEAREST CLELIA.

NO words can describe the excess of my grief at the news of your disappointment: but, my dear, how was it possible for your chairmen to mistake the house so egregiously? Not know where Mrs. Egret lived!—Foolish fellows! she is one of the greatest milliners in town, and employed by persons of the first rank. But don't be uneasy, I shall see you this afternoon: your messenger found me preparing to set out for town with my aunt. Adieu, my Clelia; and believe me, with the most unparalleled affection, ever your's,

CELINDA.

The hopes of seeing her friend, and being settled in more agreeable lodgings, gave Henrietta such a flow of spirits, that when she was summoned to dinner by her landlady, she appeared less reserved than usual, and even kept up the conversation with some kind of cheerfulness. Mrs. Eccles, finding her in so good a humour, introduced the subject which ran most in her head. The fine young gentleman, who had been her customer in the morning, was praised in raptures of admiration—so genteel, so well bred, such sparkling eyes, such an air of distinction—every now and then exclaiming, 'Well, you have certainly made a conquest of him—we shall see him again, never fear—he'll find his way here again, I warrant him.'

Miss Courteney, to put an end to this discourse, told her landlady, that she expected a lady to drink tea with her that afternoon. Mrs. Eccles immediately gave orders for the dining room to be put in order, and thither Miss Courteney retired in expectation of her visitor. At six o'clock a footman's rap at the door announced the arrival of Miss Woodby; Henrietta ran to the head of the stairs to receive her.

'O Heavens! my dear creature,' cried Miss Woodby, 'what trouble have I been in upon your account!—but even the disquiet of friendship is pleasing; I would not be insensible of that charm-

ing passion, nor without an object of it, for the world.'

Miss Courteney thanked her in very obliging terms, while her sentimental friend adjusted her dress in the glass, and then throwing herself into a chair, declared that she was all impatience to hear her history.

'Permit me,' said Miss Courteney, 'to inform you first, that I am not easy here; I do not greatly like my landlady, and I wish I could remove this very night.' Miss Woodby told her it was impossible, because she had not yet seen Mrs. Egret, but that she would go to her in the morning, and prepare her for her coming. Henrietta, being now at ease, complied with her friend's request, and began her little history in this manner.

CHAP. VII.

IN WHICH HENRIETTA RELATES THE STORY OF HER PARENTS, INTRODUCTORY TO HER OWN.

IT is no wonder, my dear Miss Woodby, that at these early years I am precipitated into distresses and dangers; my very birth was a misfortune to my parents, and entailed upon them those miseries which began by their unhappy passion.

'My father was the youngest of three brothers, but so great a favourite of his father the Earl of —, that it was thought he would make his fortune very considerable, having a very large estate, and a very lucrative employment, out of which he every year laid by large sums to provide for his younger sons, of whom my father, as I have already said, was the best beloved.'

'It happened one day, that the widow of an officer in the army came to solicit the earl's interest towards getting her a pension. She was accompanied by her daughter, a young woman about sixteen years of age, and who must at that time have been exquisitely handsome, since, after a long series of troubles, and in an age more advanced, she appeared to me one of the most beautiful women in the world.'

'The widow, by a certain method of persuasion, which operates powerfully on the domesticks of men in place, got her petition sent up to the earl.'

‘ earl. It imported that her husband, after having served near fifty years in the army, had obtained leave to sell his commission for the benefit of his wife and child; that the money arising from it had been deposited in the hands of an agent who had broke a few months afterwards, by which unhappy accident all the money was lost, and this loss had so greatly affected the old gentleman, that he died a few weeks afterwards, leaving his wife and child wholly unprovided for, and made wretched by those very means that were calculated to secure them a genteel subsistence; since by the sale of her husband’s commission, the widow was no longer intitled to a pension, which however she hoped to obtain, in consideration of his long services, and the peculiar circumstances of her misfortune.

‘ The widow, who knew it was in this nobleman’s power to put her immediately upon the list of pensions, conceived great hopes of the success of her application, when, after waiting two hours in the hall, she was ordered to attend his lordship in his library.

‘ The nobleman received her with civility enough; but his first words destroyed those expectations with which she had flattered herself.

“ I am sorry it is not in my power to do you any service,” said he; “ your husband sold out, therefore you have no right to the pension. I pity your misfortune; but in this case there is nothing to be done.”

‘ The widow was a woman of sense and breeding: she was sensible that the earl paid no regard to her plea, otherwise he would not have urged that as an argument against granting her petition, without which no petition would have been necessary: intreaties she found would be fruitless, therefore she would not descend to the meanness of a suppliant, but cursed in silent anguish, and withdrew.

‘ The earl’s youngest son, who was present at this scene, and who had beheld the decent sorrow of the mother with reverence, the innocent beauty of the daughter with tender admiration, impelled by an emotion which yet he knew not the cause of, hastily followed them, and offered his hand to the widow to lead her down stairs.

‘ She, who from a natural dignity of sentiment, had been enabled to endure the supercilious behaviour of the father without betraying any signs of discomposure, burst into tears at this instance of unexpected attention and respect in the son.

‘ Mr. Courteney, as he led her down stairs: had his eyes incessantly turned towards the young lady, who followed blushing, to see herself so earnestly beheld. He found they had not a coach waiting for them; he ordered a servant to call one; and in the meantime desired they would walk into a parlour, where he took occasion to express his concern to the widow for the disappointment she had met with; but assured her, that he would employ his good offices in her favour; and from the influence he had over his father, he said he hoped he should succeed. He then desired to know where he might wait upon her, in case he had any good news to bring her.

‘ The widow, charmed with his politeness, astonished at his kindness, and full of hope and pleasing expectation, gave him a direction in writing, which she had brought with her.

‘ Mr. Courteney received it, bowing low, as if she had conferred a favour on him; a favour it was indeed, for, by this time, he was lost in love for the charming daughter, whose looks discovered such soft sensibility of her situation; such conscious dignity, which misfortune could not impair; such calm resignation, as if, superior to her woes, that her beauty seemed her least perfection; and he was more captivated by the graces of her mind that shone out in her person, than with her lovely person itself.

‘ The coach was now come; he sighed when he took leave of them, rivetting his eyes on the young charmer, who modestly looked down, unable to bear his ardent glances. Again he assured the widow of his services; and, suddenly recollecting himself, he put a purse into her hand, begging her to accept that trifle as an earnest of his friendship.

‘ The lady was so much surprised at his behaviour, that she was at a loss in what manner to answer him; and before she could form any, she found herself in the coach, to which he had accompanied her with great respect.

‘ When

When the coach drove from the door, she examined the contents of the purse, and found five and twenty guineas in it: a present which, if it had been less, would have mortified her pride, and being so considerable, alarmed her prudence. She recollected every circumstance of the young gentleman's behaviour, and all contributed to persuade her, that he was actuated by some motive more forcible than mere compassion.

She remembered that she had caught him gazing earnestly at her daughter; she reproached herself for taking her with her, for accepting the money, for giving a direction. She dreaded the consequence of having exposed her child to the attempts of a young man formed to please, and by his rank and fortune enabled to pursue every method that could gratify his passions. She began now to be solicitous about the effect such uncommon generosity had on the mind of her daughter. She asked her what she thought of the gentleman, who so kindly interested himself in their affairs, notwithstanding the cruel denial his father had given?

Miss, whose gratitude had with difficulty been restrained from rising from her heart to her tongue, eagerly seized this opportunity to praise their benefactor. Her expressions were so lively, she showed so tender a sensibility of his kindness, such a blushing approbation of his person and manners, that the good widow thought proper to check her vivacity by a little reproof, and attributed all the respect he had shown them to his natural politeness, and his offers of service; and the present he had forced on her, to a sudden fallacy of compassion which young unexperienced persons are liable to. However, her apprehensions were now increased; and when Mr. Courteney came to see her, in consequence of his promise, which was two days afterwards, she had already taken her resolution.

She took care that her daughter should not be in the way when he sent up his name; and, notwithstanding the politeness with which he accosted her, she observed that he was disappointed, and that his eyes involuntarily sought out an object which he more wished to see than her.

I don't know whether these little particulars may not seem tedious to you, my dear Miss Woodby; but I have often heard my mother repeat

them with delight, declaring that these first tokens of my father's affection for her made so deep an impression on her heart, fluctuating, as it then was, between hope and fear, that she ever retained the most lively remembrance of them, and could never relate them without feeling in some degree the same pleasing emotions with which she was at that time agitated.

Mr. Courteney began the conversation with assuring the widow, that he had been mindful of her affairs; that his solicitations had not yet indeed had the desired effect, but that he hoped shortly to bring her better news. The widow thanked him with great politeness for his kind interposition in her favour, which she declared would always have a claim to her sincerest gratitude, whether he succeeded or not in his applications. She then drew the purse out of her pocket, and putting it respectfully into his hands, told him, that not being in any immediate necessity, she begged he would not take it ill if she declined accepting a present which would lay her under an unreturnable obligation.

Mr. Courteney blushed with surprise and disappointment; but the dignity with which she looked and spoke, making it impossible for him to press her any farther, he received the money back again with a low bow, apologizing at the same time for the liberty he had taken.

The widow, seeing him disconcerted, politely recommended her interests to him; and Mr. Courteney, charmed that she would allow him to be her friend on any terms, retired with a promise that he would take as much care of them as of his own.

This interview, continued Henrietta, confirmed the widow in her suspicions, that her daughter was not indifferent to their new benefactor: he had observed her scrupulous reserve with regard to the young beauty, and hoped to remove it by affecting a total neglect of her; so that he did not even enquire how she did. Whatever is done with design is always overdone: the widow was persuaded that a man of Mr. Courteney's good breeding would not have passed over one of the common forms of politeness, but to answer some secret purpose. Her vigilance increased in proportion to her fears; and although he made her several

visits, under pretence of enquiring more minutely into the circumstances of her case, yet he never was so fortunate as to find her daughter with her.

This conduct, while it stimulated his passion, gave him a high opinion of the virtue and prudence of her, who, in such unhappy circumstances, showed such extreme attention to the honour and reputation of her child. Hitherto he had not been at the trouble to examine his own views and designs upon this young beauty. Hurried away by the violence of his passion, he had assiduously sought opportunities of seeing and conversing with her; but the difficulties he met with made him look into his own heart, that he might know if he was still sufficient master of it to give over a pursuit which was likely to prove fruitless.

Amazed to find that what he took for a transient inclination, was a passion immoveably fixed; that he had formed resolutions, when he believed he had only entertained desires; that the whole happiness and misery of his life was in the power of a young woman, destitute of friends, fortune, hopes, and expectations, and rich only in beauty and virtue—for virtuous he was sure she must be, under the care of so wise and prudent a mother—he was alarmed at his own condition; dreaded the consequences of a passion so placed as that it could never procure the sanction of his father's consent, and resolved to expose himself no more to the danger of seeing her.

However, he did not fail to solicit his father very earnestly in behalf of the unfortunate widow. The earl, who had taken notice of his officious respect the day she was introduced to him, and attributed it rather to the beauty of the daughter than any sentiment of compassion, began to be uneasy at his so frequently pressing him on that subject, and forbade him to mention it any more.

Mr. Courteney was obliged to be silent, lest he should confirm those suspicions which he saw his father had conceived; and finding his mind in a very uneasy state, he hoped that, by removing himself to a greater distance from the object he loved, he should remove the thoughts of her likewise: he obtained his father's consent to his retreating for a few weeks to their seat

in the country, under pretence of a slight indisposition; but he could not resolve to go without endeavouring once more to force a present upon the widow, which might prevent her being exposed to any distress during his absence.

He therefore wrote to her, and acquainting her with the ill success of his mediation with his father, expressed the highest concern for it, and assured her that nothing could alleviate it but her acceptance of the bank note which he inclosed, and which was for fifty pounds: he told her, he was going into the country, that she might not suppose he had any design of inducing her by such a present to admit his visits; and concluded with assuring her, that she might at all times command his services, and rely on his friendship.

He did not send away this letter till he was ready to take horse; and being now more composed, from the belief that he had silenced the scruples of this good woman, and secured her and her lovely daughter from any immediate necessity, he pursued his journey, full of pleasing reflections on the disinterestedness of his love.

CHAP. VIII.

IN WHICH HENRIETTA CONTINUES HER HISTORY.

ABSENCE,' says a certain writer, 'increases violent passions, and cures moderate ones; just as the wind extinguishes a small flame, while it makes a great one burn more fiercely. Mr. Courteney's passion was of this kind; he had loved with violence from the moment he began to love. In vain he had recourse to books, to company, to field sports, and rural amusements; it was not possible for him to call off his thoughts a moment from that object from whom he fled with such care. Two months he wore away in a constant perturbation of mind, still flattering himself that he was near his cure, while his disease gathered strength every day.

It happened that one evening he fell into company with some officers, whose regiment was quartered in that part of the country; and one of them mentioned Colonel Carlton, and the

unhappy

unhappy situation his widow and daughter were left in.

Mr. Courteney, roused to attention by that name so dear to him, pretended to be wholly ignorant of those ladies; that he might indulge himself in the pleasure of talking of her he loved.

The officer gave him a circumstantial detail of what he knew as well as himself; concluding with many commendations of Mrs. Carlton's good sense, prudence, and virtue; and such rapturous praises of the young lady's beauty and uncommon qualifications at such early years, that Mr. Courteney, for the first time sensible of the tortures of jealousy, could with difficulty conceal his emotions.

"You speak so feelingly," said a gentleman in company, "of this young lady's perfections, that I fancy you are in love with her. Come, here is her health; is it to be a match?"

"I should be but too happy in such a wife," replied the officer; "but she deserves a better husband: it is not for a poor lieutenant," added he, smiling, "to marry for love; but if I was a man of fortune, I would prefer Miss Carlton to all the women I have ever seen."

Mr. Courteney afterwards declared, that he suffered inconceivable anguish during this conversation. He quitted the company with some precipitation; and when he was at liberty to reflect, he reproached himself a thousand times for his folly in leaving such a treasure for another to obtain. Every man he thought would look upon Miss Carlton with the same eyes as that young officer; and among them might not one be found blest with a fortune to make her happy, and above all narrow considerations which could hinder him from making himself so?

Resolutions are easily formed when the heart suggests them. Mr. Courteney, who had so long fluctuated between his passion and his prudence, was, by the fear of losing what he loved, determined in an instant to put it past the possibility of losing her. His father's anger, which at first appeared so formidable to him, was now considered as a trifle, that would be easily got over: he was not going to introduce any stale mistress into a noble family, nor to give a comedian or singer

for a sister to his sisters, and a daughter to his mother; alliances so much in fashion with the present race of nobility and people of distinction: in Miss Carlton he should marry birth, beauty, virtue, every perfection but riches; but unhappily that, in the estimation of his father, was worth them all.

His fortune indeed was undetermined; it might be great, it might be very inconsiderable, since it depended upon the will of his father. His father would never consent to his marriage with Miss Carlton; but though disoblige, yet, loving him as he did, was it likely that he would always continue inexorable? Besides, he had a certain, though a remote prospect, of a large estate, to which he was to succeed at the death of a relation, who was old, and had been married twenty years, without having ever had a child.

Should he find it impossible to reconcile his father to his marriage, yet he was secure at least of a genteel provision; but with such excellencies as Miss Carlton was possessed of, how could it be imagined that she should not in time conciliate his father's affections, and make him approve of his choice?

"There is no logick, my dear Miss Woodby, like the logick of the heart." Mr. Courteney, as is usual on such occasions, having taken his resolution before he reasoned upon the matter, reasoned afterwards in such a manner as to be soon persuaded his resolution was right.

Early the next morning he ordered his horses to be made ready, and he returned to London with all imaginable expedition. He alighted at the house of a friend, where he dismissed his servants and horses, and then taking a hackney coach, was driven to the street in which Mrs. Carlton lived. Upon stopping at the house, and enquiring for Mrs. Carlton, he was told that she had left it five weeks before, and being greatly indisposed, had taken lodgings at Chelsea for the air.

Mr. Courteney, who now thought every moment an age till he saw Miss Carlton, and had acquainted her with his passion and his honourable intentions, procured as full a direction as could be given him; but notwithstanding his impatience to be with his mistress,

“mistress, he obeyed the dictates of his duty, in first going home to pay his respects to his father.

“The earl received him a little coldly; an expression of displeasure was on his countenance, which however wore off by degrees, as he enquired concerning his health, his studies and amusements, during his absence. At length seeming to recollect something, he went to his cabinet, took out a letter, the seal of which had been broke, and delivered it into his son’s hand, assuming an angry countenance as before.

“Mr. Courteney, not able to imagine what all this meant, opened the letter hastily, and found it was from Mrs. Carlton, dated the very day of his departure, and in it was inclosed the bank note he had sent. The purport of her letter was to refuse in a genteel but steady manner all pecuniary assistance from him; however, she thanked him for his civilities, and acknowledged herself greatly obliged to him.

“When Mr. Courteney had read this letter, which he did with much confusion, the earl asked him sternly, “what was his design by engaging in such a commerce?” “You are in love with the daughter,” added he, “no doubt; but if you corrupt her, you are not an honest man; if you marry her, you are no longer my son.”

“He left him as he pronounced these words; and Mr. Courteney, who, while he beheld it at a distance, thought his father’s displeasure might be sustained, was overwhelmed with the first effects of it, and relapsed into all his former doubts, anxiety, and irresolution.

“He retired to his own chamber, to consider on what he ought to do; but, unable to bear the cruel war which such contrary interests, such opposite wishes, such perplexed designs, raised in his mind, he hurried out of the house to lose reflection in a variety of objects, and took his way to the Park.

“He walked down the Mall: it was crowded with company which did not in the least engage his attention; he continued his walk, and finding himself at Buckingham Gate, his steps mechanically pursued the road that led to Chelsea.

“As soon as he saw himself near the place where his mistress resided, all other thoughts were absorbed in the

“transporting reflection, that he should see her within a few moments; his father’s threats were forgot, the loss of his favour filled him with no uneasy apprehensions. To how many revolutions is the human mind subject, when passion has assumed the reins of government, which reason ought to hold! Mr. Courteney had almost imperceptibly to himself resumed his first design of offering his hand to Miss Carlton.

“With very little difficulty he found out the house where her mother and she lodged; the door was opened to him by a girl, who, upon his enquiring if Mrs. Carlton was at home, told him she was sick in bed, and, showing him into a little parlour, ran up stairs to acquaint Miss, as he supposed, that a gentleman was there.

“In a few minutes a venerable old woman appeared, who had so fixed a concern upon her countenance, that Mr. Courteney, shifting his thoughts from the illness of the mother to the apprehension of some possible misfortune to the daughter, (for love, if it hopes all, fears all likewise) asked her with great emotion if any thing extraordinary had happened to the ladies.

“The good woman, pleased with his solicitude, which she thought promised some relief, told him plainly, that Mrs. Carlton was in the utmost distress; that she had been ill several weeks; that she had not been able to procure proper advice; “And,” added she, bursting into tears, “she has even wanted common necessaries.”

“O my God!” exclaimed Mr. Courteney, with a deep sigh; “but Miss—” “what is become of Miss?”—“Alas! Sir,” replied the old woman, “the dear child is almost dead with fatigue and grief; she has watched by her mother these ten nights successively, there is no persuading her to quit her for a moment. I left her in an agony of sorrow, for it is believed poor Mrs. Carlton cannot live three days.”

“Conduct me to her,” cried Mr. Courteney eagerly; “I may possibly be able to comfort her; let me see her, I conjure you, immediately.”

“Stay a moment, Sir,” said the old woman, stopping him, for he was making towards the door; “I will go up first and inform the ladies.”—“There is no occasion for that,” said Mr.

“ Mr. Courteney; “ Mrs. Carlton knows me very well; she will not, I am sure, be sorry to see me; I have something to say to her.”

The good woman, seeing his obstinacy, permitted him to follow her up stairs: she gently opened the chamber-door, and, approaching the bed where the sick lady lay, told her there was a friend of her's who desired to see her. Mr. Courteney entered that moment, and beheld a sight which called for more fortitude than he was at that time possessed of to support without tears.

Mrs. Carlton lay extended on her bed, supported by a height of cushions to facilitate her breathing, which she seemed to do with great difficulty. Death appeared in her languid countenance; and an expression of the tender anguish of a mother for the child whom she was so soon to leave exposed to the insults of a barbarous world, mixed with the pious resignation of a Christian, was impressed on every line of it.

Miss Carlton was kneeling at the bed-side, and held one of her mother's hands, which she was bending over in an agony of grief. Upon hearing what the old woman said, she raised her head; and, directing her streaming eyes to the place where Mr. Courteney stood, showed him a face pale, emaciated, but lovely still. At sight of him a faint blush overspread her cheeks, and hastily turning to her mother—“ It is Mr. Courteney, my dear mamma,” said she.

“ Oh! Sir,” said Mrs. Carlton, perceiving him, “ you are very good to seek out affliction thus. I shall shortly be past all my cares; but what will become of this poor helpless orphan?” The tears that streamed from her eyes prevented her farther utterance.

Mr. Courteney threw himself on his knees at the bed-side, and almost sobbing with the violence of his emotions at this affecting language—“ Oh! Madam,” said he, “ what must you not have suffered? why would you not accept what little assistance it was in my power to offer you? I know your delicate scruples. I come to beg you will give yourself a right to all my future services. I have something to communicate to you. But,” added

he, looking at the old woman who had introduced him, “ we are not alone.”

“ Speak freely, Sir,” said Mrs. Carlton; “ this good woman is my daughter's nurse; she knows all my affairs; I am much indebted to her kindness and affection for my child.”

“ What I have to say,” proceeded Mr. Courteney, “ relates to that dear, that lovely daughter: I loved her from the first moment I saw her; such innocence, such beauty, could not suggest any impure desire. As soon as I knew the force of my passion, which absence first made me know, I fixed it's purpose. Permit me to offer her my hand; I cannot be happy without her.”

“ What do you say, Sir?” said Mrs. Carlton, excessively surprised: “ would you marry my daughter?” Then, after a little pause, “ No,” pursued she, “ this can never be, your father will not consent to it.”

“ I own freely to you, Madam,” said Mr. Courteney, “ that I have no hopes of gaining my father's consent; but when the affair is irretrievable, he will be softened, I am sure he will. Let not this scruple hinder you from giving your daughter a protector.”—“ Surely,” said Mrs. Carlton, lifting up her eyes, “ the hand of Providence is here; and it would be impious to oppose it's will. You have my consent, Sir,” said she to Mr. Courteney; “ would it pleased God that you had his also, whom it is your duty to consult on this occasion, and to obey if you can.”

Mr. Courteney assured her he would solicit his father's consent; but that he could not be happy without Miss Carlton, and was already determined. That young lady had retired into another room at the beginning of this discourse, in perturbations which may be better imagined than described. Mr. Courteney, by her mother's permission, attended her: he approached her with a timidity which, the inequality of their circumstances considered, may seem surprising; but those who know the nature of a sincere and violent passion, will easily account for it—“ for fear,” says an elegant writer, “ always accompanies love when it is great, as flames burn highest when they tremble most.” He took her hand,

hand, and kissing it respectfully, told her that Mrs. Carlton had begun his felicity, by permitting him to offer himself to her acceptance as a husband; but that she only could complete it by her consent.

Miss Carlton blushed, turned pale, and blushed again: at length she replied, that she had no other will than her mother's. "But this offer," added she, in an accent that expressed at once her surprize and gratitude, "is so generous, so unexpected, so un-
"hoped for——" The last words seemed to escape her; she blushed more than before. Mr. Courteney took in all their tender meaning: he kissed her hand again in a rapture of joy, and was beginning to make her some passionate declarations, when they heard the nurse crying out for help.

Surprize and joy at what had so lately happened, operated so powerfully on Mrs. Carlton's almost exhausted spirits, that she had fallen into a fainting fit. Miss Carlton eagerly flew to her assistance, Mr. Courteney followed her with an anxious concern. As soon as she recovered, he told her he would instantly return to London, and dispatch a physician to attend her, and would be with her again the next evening.

He took a tender farewell of his mistress; and calling the nurse aside, gave her twenty guineas, to provide whatever was wanting, and hastened back to London.

CHAP. IX.

THE STORY CONTINUED.

MR. Courteney's first care was to send a physician to the sick lady; and, that performed, he deliberated in what manner he should acquaint his father with his intention. He knew him too well to hope for his consent to his marriage with Miss Carlton; and he had not courage enough to stand the reproaches of a parent, whom he was predetermined to disobey. He chose therefore to write to him, supposing he should, when unawed by his presence, be able to find arguments strong enough to make some impression on his mind, and to plead his excuse.

As he dreaded extremely a private interview with his father, he was glad to find, at his return home, that a great deal of company was expected that evening. He did not appear till they were all met, having purposely wasted a good deal of time in dressing. The earl was still ruffled with what had passed before between him and his son; and Mr. Courteney observed, that his looks and behaviour were less kind than usual.

As soon as he retired to his apartment, instead of going to bed, he sat down to compose a letter to his father. He began with the highest expressions of grief for having, by an irresistible impulse, engaged his affections without his concurrence: he justified his choice by every argument that love could suggest in favour of the beloved object; he implored the continuance of his father's affection; and promised in every future action the most perfect submission and obedience.

This difficult task performed, he found his mind much easier and composed, as if in reality he had obtained the pardon he was soliciting for; and now resigned himself to all the pleasing reveries of successful love.

After a few hours rest, he rose, under pretence of going out to ride; and, leaving orders with a servant to deliver his letter to his father at his hour of dressing, he went immediately to the Commons, procured a licence, and flew to Chelsea. He found Mrs. Carlton much worse than when he left her; yet joy at seeing him again seemed to give her new life and spirits. She called him to her bed side; he acquainted her with what he had done; she had some scruples, but the fear of leaving her daughter destitute overbalanced them all.

"I am dying," said she, pressing his hand; "the physician you sent was too sincere to flatter me. I die contented, since I leave my child under your protection. Let the ceremony be performed in my presence; after that is over, I shall have no farther business with the world." Miss Carlton, drowned in tears, and almost sinking under the violence of her grief, was with great difficulty persuaded to give her hand to her lover at so shocking a time; but her dying mother conjured her to give her that last satisfaction. A
clergyman

clergyman was instantly provided by the faithful nurse: the clerk acted as father to the weeping bride; and Mr. Courteney's servant and the good nurse were witnesses. Never sure was there a more melancholy wedding—the bridegroom's joy was checked by sympathizing concern—the bride's tender sensibility lost in agonizing woe—the service was performed with the solemn sadness of a funeral.

As soon as it was over, Mrs. Carlton collected all her remaining strength and spirits to pronounce a blessing on the new-wedded pair; and straining her daughter with a weak embrace, declared, that she was now easy, and should die in peace. Mr. Courteney made a genteel present to the clergyman and the clerk, and dismissed them: he took an affectionate leave of Mrs. Carlton, who desired to be left to her private devotions; and earnestly recommending his bride to the care of her nurse, he went back to town with a resolution to declare his marriage to his father; his sentiments being too delicate, and his notions of honour too just, to permit him on any consideration of interest to conceal the engagements he had entered into, and suffer the woman whom he thought worthy to be his wife to live under a doubtful character.

On his return home he found his letter had been delivered to the earl. His mother, being informed of his arrival, sent for him to her dressing-room, where he found her in tears. She told him that his father had been in the most violent transports of anger, upon receiving his letter; and she conjured him, if he valued her peace, to proceed no farther in a design that must inevitably be his ruin.

Mr. Courteney sighed, and was preparing to answer her, when the earl himself entered the room. The impression of his first fury was still visible on his countenance. As soon as he saw his son, he poured a torrent of reproaches on him, inveighing against his meanness and ingratitude; then suddenly, and with great vehemence, uttered the most dreadful imprecations on him, if he followed the dictates of his despicably-placed passion, and married a beggar.

"Oh, hold, my lord!" cried Mr. Courteney, throwing himself at his feet, "curse me not, for I am already

married." The earl, almost mad with rage at this confession, spurned him rudely with his foot, and flung out of the room, declaring that he renounced him for ever.

Mr. Courteney, stung with indignation at this treatment, rose up, and uttered some words of resentment, when his attention was called off from the affront he had suffered, by the condition in which he observed his mother, who, from surprize and terror, had swooned, and lay motionless on the couch where she had thrown herself. Mr. Courteney, excessively shocked at this sight, rung the bell for her woman, while he applied himself to give her all the assistance he was able. As soon as he saw her recovering, he staid not to increase her disorder by his presence, but retired to his apartment; and after he had taken all the money he had in his cabinet, he left that house which was now become dreadful to him, and went to the lodgings of a young gentleman who had been his fellow student at college, and whom he had reason to believe his friend, if friendship can be acquired by conferring obligations.

To this young gentleman he unloaded his heart, but found not the consolation he expected. He expressed the utmost astonishment and concern for his indiscreet marriage; and, instead of offering him any advice in his perplexed situation, or consoling him, oppressed as he was by the displeasure of his father, manifested in so contemptuous a manner, he maintained that the earl's anger was just and reasonable, and exclaimed at his imprudence in ruining himself for a woman.

Before the mischief was done, remonstrances might have been seasonable; but nothing could be more unkind than to insist upon an error which was already committed, and could not be repaired. Mr. Courteney was at first surprized at this behaviour in a man who had always shewn so deep a sense of his kindness, and professed the most tender friendship for him: but he had still temper enough left to consider, that most people follow their own interests, and are at one time grateful for their convenience, and at another ungrateful for the same reason.

He left him without taking any notice of the disgust he had conceived; and

and after he had hired lodgings for the reception of his wife, he hastened to Chelsea, where he arrived time enough to moderate the first agonies of her grief for the loss of her mother, who had expired a few moments before.

Having given directions concerning the funeral, he forced Mrs. Courteney out of that mournful house, and carried her to London, applying himself with the tenderest assiduity to alleviate the sense of her loss, all his own just causes of uneasiness being forgot, and his anxiety for the melancholy future lost in his contemplation of the happy present: so true it is, that wedded love supplies the want of every other blessing in life; and as no condition can be truly happy without it, so none can be absolutely miserable with it.

CHAP. X.

A FARTHER CONTINUATION OF HER STORY.

IN the mean time Mr. Courteney corresponded privately with his mother, whose gentle nature had, with little difficulty, been softened into a forgiveness of her son's imprudent marriage; but all her endeavours to reconcile the earl to it had proved ineffectual. He continued inexorable, and peremptorily commanded her never to mention that undutiful son to him more, whom he reprobated for ever.

The countess durst not hazard an interview with her son, while his father's resentment continued unappeased; but she allowed him two hundred pounds a year out of her pin-money, and upon this moderate income they lived with more happiness than is often to be found in the highest affluence.

'And why not?' interrupted Miss Woodby here; 'a cottage, with the person we love, is to be preferred to a palace with one to whom interest and not affection has joined us. I know I could be contented to keep sheep with the man I loved. Speak truth, my dear Clelia, would you not like to be a shepherdess? O, what a delightful employment, to watch a few harmless sheep! to wander through

groves and fields; or lie reclined upon the flowery margin of some murmuring stream, and listen to the plaintive voice of the nightingale, or the tender faithful vows of some lovely and beloved shepherd!'

'What a romantick picture,' said Miss Courteney, laughing, 'have you drawn! It is a mighty pretty one it must be confessed, but there is no resemblance in it. I remember, when I was about fourteen, I had the same notions of shepherds and shepherdesses; but I was soon cured. I happened to be at the house of a country gentleman, who managed a large farm of his own. One of the servants saying something about the shepherd, my heart danced at the word. My imagination represented to me such a pretty figure as we see on the stage in the dramattick pastoral entertainment of Damon and Phillida, in a fine green habit, all bedizened with ribbands, a neat crook, and a garland of flowers. I begged to be permitted to go into the fields to see the shepherd, and eagerly inquired if there were no shepherdesses likewise; but how was I disappointed!—The shepherd was an old man in a ragged waistcoat, and so miserably sun-burnt, that he might have been mistaken for a mulatto: the shepherdess looked like a witch; she was sitting under a hedge, mending old stockings, with a straw hive on her head, and a tattered garment on, of as many colours as there were patches in it. How diverting it would have been to have heard this enamoured swain sigh out soft things to this lovely nymph!'

'Oh! ridiculous,' cried Miss Woodby; 'I am sick at the very thought. But, my dear Clelia, go on, I beseech you, with your story.'

'I have not come to my own story yet,' said Miss Courteney; 'all that you have heard has been only an introduction to it; and I have given you the history of my parents in the words, as near as I can remember, of my mother; for she loved scribbling, and committed the principal incidents of her life to paper, which for my instruction she permitted me to read: I say instruction, for she was a woman of fine understanding and deep thinking; and she had interspersed through her little narrative many beautiful and just

just reflections, and many observations and useful maxims, such as her reading, which was very comprehensive, and her experience, furnished her with.

'Proceed, my dear Clelia,' said Miss Woodby, observing Henrietta paused here; 'I am impatient to hear more.'—'If you please,' said Miss Courteney, 'we will drink tea first.'—'I have just two hours to stay with you,' replied Miss Woodby, looking at her watch; 'if I am at home by nine o'clock, which is my aunt's hour for supper, it will do.' Henrietta then ordered tea, which was soon dispatched, and she resumed her story in this manner.

'My father, who was very desirous of conciliating his elder brother's affections at least, wrote to him, he being now upon his travels, and gave him an account of his marriage; but his letter, though conceived in the most tender and respectful terms, produced a cruel and supercilious answer, which not only took away all hope of his proving a mediator between him and his father, but proved that he had in him no longer a friend or brother.

'His affairs were in this desperate situation when my mother became pregnant. A distant relation of my father's now took an interest in this event, and being very rich and ambitious of making a family, he declared that, if the child was a son, he would adopt him and make him his heir. You may imagine this design was received with great joy: the old gentleman was very assiduous in his visits to my mother during her pregnancy, and seemed extremely happy in the thoughts of perpetuating his name; an ambition very common to persons of low extraction, who, by industry and thrift, have risen to great riches: for he was only by marriage a relation to my father, and had been too much neglected on account of the meanness of his original. But all these flattering expectations were destroyed by my birth, which I had reason to say proved a misfortune to my parents. The capricious old man was so greatly chagrined at his disappointment, that he transferred all his favours to another cousin, who was so lucky as to present him with a son to succeed to his for-

tune, and continue his obscure name to posterity.

'My brother's birth happened a year afterwards, and unfortunately for him a year too late. My father still continued to draw his whole income from the bounty of his mother, who was a constant but fruitless mediator in his behalf: her death, which happened about three years after his marriage, was an irreparable loss to him; for it was not improbable but the lenient hand of time, which weakens the force of every passion, joined to her tender solicitations, might have effected a reconciliation between his father and him; but this hope was now no more: the countess bequeathed my father all the money she had saved, which was but a very small sum; for she had always given with a liberal hand to the poor, though with so little ostentation, that it was supposed she had saved some thousands out of her pin-money, for she was less expensive than any other woman of her rank in England; but it was not till after my father's marriage that she began to save, and then only for him.

'Six hundred pounds was all that was found in her cabinet, which some months after her decease was paid to my father with every circumstance of contempt.

'These repeated calamities were so far from lessening the love of my father and mother, that they seemed to redouble their tenderness; seeking in each other that happiness which fortune denied them, and which they were always sure to find in their own virtue and mutual affection.

'My father, who had had a very liberal education, employed the greatest part of his time in the instruction of his children: under his tuition I acquired the French and Italian languages; by my mother I was taught every useful accomplishment for a young woman in my situation; nor did my father's narrow circumstances hinder him from procuring me those which were suitable to my birth. My brother had no other tutor but this excellent father, who qualified him for an university; and at fourteen years of age he was sent to that of Leyden, and I have never seen him since.

'In the mean time the earl my grandfather, who still continued inexorable,

‘ was taken off suddenly by an apopleck fit; and having never altered his will, which he made immediately after the marriage of my father, he found he was cut off with a shilling. This stroke, as it was always expected, was less sensibly felt than another which immediately followed it. That relation, to whose estate my father was to succeed, having buried his wife, married a young woman, who in a year afterwards brought him a son to inherit his fortune.

‘ My father, now seeing no prospect of any provision for his children, fell into a deep melancholy: he had, by the interest of some of his friends, obtained a place which brought him in between three and four hundred a year; but out of this it was impossible to save much. The uneasiness of mind which he laboured under corrupted his blood; he was seized with a decay, which carried him off in a few months, and deprived his wife of the best husband, his children of the best father that ever was.

‘ In his last illness he had wrote to his brother, and recommended his helpless family to his compassion; but that nobleman, whose avarice was his strongest passion, and whose resentment against his brother was kept up by the arts of his wife, her family, though noble, being very poor, and therefore dependent upon him, took no other notice of my father’s last request, than to send my mother a bank bill for an hundred pounds; declaring at the same time, that it was all the assistance she must ever expect from him; and with this heroick act of generosity he silenced the soft pleadings of nature, and persuaded himself that he had done his duty.

‘ My mother, being young with child when my father died, miscarried; and by that accident, together with her continual grief, she fell into a languishing illness, which threatened a short period to her days. Eight hundred pounds was all that my father left: from this small sum a widow and two children were to draw their future subsistence. What a melancholy prospect! however, my brother, who was then about seventeen, had made such great proficiency in learning, that, notwithstanding his youth, he was recom-

‘ mended by the professors of the university to have the care of some English youths who studied there, which afforded him a decent subsistence.

‘ My mother having placed eight hundred pounds in the hands of a rich merchant, a man of birth and liberal education, who had been a friend of my father’s, and gave her very good interest for it, she disposed of all her furniture, and with the money arising from the sale, set out with me for Bath, the waters being prescribed to her by her physician.

‘ Not being able to support the expense of living in the town, she took lodgings in a pleasant village, about three miles distant from it; and here, feeling her distemper daily gaining ground, she prepared for death, with a resignation that was only interrupted by her anxiety for me.

‘ It was not indeed easy to form any plan for my future subsistence, which would not subject me to a situation very unfit for my birth. Had my brother been provided for, she would have made no scruple of sinking that small sum that was left into an annuity for my life, which with economy might support me above necessity and dependence. She wrote to my brother, and desired his advice with regard to me. My brother, as if he had entered into her views, in his answer conjured her to have no solicitude about him, since, with the education he had received, he could not fail of supporting himself in the character of a gentleman, but to dispose of that money in any manner which might be most for my advantage.

‘ My mother shed tears of tender satisfaction over this letter, so full of duty to her, and affection for me; but the more generous and disinterested appeared her son, the less was she capable of taking a resolution, which, if any disappointment happened to him, must leave him without any resource.

‘ You may be sure, my dear Miss Woodby, I was not very forward to fix her purpose; for I could not bear the thought of being the only person, in our little distressed family, to whom a subsistence was secured. While my mother was thus fluctuating, she was visited in her retirement by Lady Manning, a widow lady of a very plentiful fortune.

fortune, with whom she had been in some degree of intimacy during the life of my father.

This lady shewed great fondness for me; and my mother imparting to her her difficulties with regard to settling me, Lady Manning begged her to make herself quite easy, for that she would take me under her own care.

"Miss Courteney," said she, "will do me honour by accepting my house for an asylum, and I and my daughter will think ourselves happy in such an agreeable companion." My mother was extremely pleased with this offer; and Lady Manning pressed me to go with her to London, for which place she was to set out in a few days.

I was so much shocked at the proposal of leaving my mother in the dangerous condition she was judged to be, that I did not receive Lady Manning's offer with that sense of her intended kindness which she doubtless expected; and when my mother, wholly governed by the consideration of my interest, urged me to go with Lady Manning, I burst into a violent passion of tears, vehemently protesting that I would never leave her; and lamenting her causeless distrust of my affection, in supposing that I could be prevailed upon, by any prospect of advantage to myself, to separate from her.

I observed Lady Manning reddened at these words, which she understood as a reproach for her making so improper a proposal, and which I really desired she should: for I was highly disgusted with her want of delicacy, in desiring me to leave my mother, and believing it possible that I could consent.

I saw pleasure in my mother's eyes at this artless expression of my tenderness for her; but at the same time I thought I could perceive by the turn of her countenance that she was apprehensive I had disobliged Lady Manning: therefore I endeavoured to re-

move her fears by the strongest assurances of gratitude to that lady. She received those assurances with a little superciliousness at first, but that presently wore off; and at parting she renewed her professions of friendship to my mother, and promises of a parent's care of me.

She left Bath three days afterwards, so that we did not see her again, which made my mother a little uneasy; but we had soon a very kind letter from her, in which she repeated all her former offers, and expressed great tenderness for me.

At her return from London, she passed through Bath in her way to her country-seat; and, finding my mother much worse, she redoubled her professions of affection for me, and was so lavish in her promises, that she left her quite easy on my account. Indeed, notwithstanding what I have suffered from Lady Manning, I shall ever think myself obliged to her for contributing so greatly towards that composure of mind which my mother felt, from the time that she thought me secure of a retreat, till it would suit with my brother's circumstances to take me under his own care.

I will not, my dear Miss Woodby, enlarge upon the last three months of my mother's life, which were spent in a constant preparation for her end. Indeed, the innocence of her manners, and the unfeigned piety that shone through her conduct, made her whole life one continued preparation for that awful moment, so dreadful to the wicked; so full of peace, confidence, and holy joy, to the good. In fine, I lost this excellent mother, and my bleeding heart still feels her loss.

The tears, which at this tender remembrance flowed from Miss Courteney's eyes, made a pathetick pause in her relation; but recovering herself, she proceeded, as will be found in the following book.



H E N R I E T T A.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAP. I.

IN WHICH HENRIETTA ENTERS
UPON HER OWN STORY, AND
SHEWS, THAT TO CONFER BE-
NEFITS, IS NOT ALWAYS A PROOF
OF BENEVOLENCE.



HE worthy merchant, re-
sumed Miss Courteney,
'whom I mentioned to
'you, had the goodness
'to come to Bath, upon
'the news of my mother's
'extreme danger. He arrived time
'enough to receive her last intreaties,
'that he would continue his friendship
'to me. I was then entered into my
'twentieth year, and chose him for my
'guardian; he would have taken me
'with him to his house, but my promise
'being engaged to Lady Manning, I
'was obliged to decline his obliging
'offer.

'I sent her an account of my mother's
'death. Mr. Damer, so was the mer-
'chant called, would not return to
'town till he saw me safely disposed of.

'About three days after I had written
'to Lady Manning, I received a letter
'from her, which was brought by one
'of her servants; in which, after the
'usual compliments of condolence, she
'desired I would set out immediately
'with the person whom she had sent to
'attend me. My guardian, for so I
'used now to call Mr. Damer, coming
'in, I told him I must prepare to be
'gone immediately, and gave him Lady
'Manning's letter to read.

'How are you to go, Miss?" said he,
'after he had looked over the letter.
'As I never doubted but Lady Man-
'ning had sent her post-chaise or cha-
'riot for me, I told him I supposed
'there was a carriage come with the
'messenger.

"O yes," replied Mr. Damer, "there
"is a very good pillion, and you are to
"ride behind the footman. I took
"notice of the equipage as I came in,
"but I shall not permit you to perform
"a journey of thirty miles in that man-
"ner: therefore, Miss, I would have
"you send a letter to the lady by her
"messenger, and inform her that your
"guardian will convey you safe to her
"seat."

'I was as much pleased with this kind
'attention in Mr. Damer, as I was
'shocked and surprised at the ungentle
'manner in which Lady Manning had
'sent for me: however, I concealed my
'thoughts of it, and wrote such a letter
'as my guardian desired me. The next
'morning at eight o'clock, a post-chaise
'was ready at the door, and Mr. Damer
'attending; all my cloaths had been
'packed up the night before, and we
'set out immediately.

'Lady Manning received us very po-
'litlely, and detained Mr. Damer to din-
'ner. I thought I could observe some-
'thing forced in the respect she seemed
'to pay me; and I was particularly dis-
'gusted with her using the words *your*
'guardian every moment, as if in de-
'rision of the title I had to one.

'When Mr. Damer went away, he
'took an opportunity to speak to me
'apart, and made me promise him, if
'I should

‘ I should have any reason to be displeased with my situation, that I would write to him plainly, and he would come himself and fetch me away. This tender solicitude in the good old man affected me very sensibly; and I could not help shedding tears when I saw him drive away.

‘ Lady Manning was extremely inquisitive about his connexion with me, and asked me a great many questions. “ I am very glad,” said she, “ your affairs are in the hands of so wise a man; for surely, he who can raise a large estate out of a trifle, as has been the case with Mr. Damer, must needs be a very wise man; and I don’t doubt but he will manage your fortune to the best advantage.”

‘ I was greatly displeased with the first part of this speech, and particularly with the manner in which the word Fortune was drauded out.

“ The poor trifle I have, Madam,” replied I, “ does not deserve to be termed a fortune.”

“ I assure you,” said she, “ it was very kind in a man of Mr. Damer’s substance to trouble himself with such inconsiderable matters; and it is a great thing for you to be permitted to call such a man Guardian.”

“ Very true, Madam,” replied I, with some warmth; “ and I believe Mr. Damer thinks it no discredit to be called so by a child of Mr. Courteney’s, whatever her fortune may be.”

‘ I observed Lady Manning to reddens at this reply, which at that time surprised me, and I could not conceive the reason of it; but I soon found that it was a mortal crime, in her eyes, to pretend to derive any advantage from birth. There was nothing which she seemed to hold in greater contempt than family-pride; and indeed, when unreasonably exerted, it is contemptible; but it was plain that Lady Manning did not think meanly of the fortuitous advantage of being well-born, because she envied those who possessed that advantage; and, though the daughter of a soap-boiler herself, she was extremely fond of being thought to have ancestors; and it was to gratify her pride, that her husband, who was a rich citizen, by trade a brewer, got himself knighted, that, together with a very large jointure, he might leave his wife the title of Lady.

‘ Surely,” interrupted Miss Woodby, “ this woman had no good intentions when she invited you to her house: it is impossible that such low creatures can have any notion of friendship or generosity.”

‘ You have guessed truly,” replied Miss Courteney; “ it was to gratify her pride, to have the daughter of a gentleman subjected to her caprice, and dependent on her bounty, that made her so solicitous to have me with her: but although I did not make these reflections immediately, yet I was so disgusted by this first conversation, that I could not promise myself any great happiness in such society.

‘ Her daughter was now introduced to me, a tall awkward thing about seventeen: she was an heiress; and being taught to believe that riches give birth, beauty, wit, and every desirable quality, she held every one in contempt who was not possessed of this advantage; and because she had it herself, she supposed she had all the others.

‘ Whatever documents were given her, they were always introduced with— “ Consider, Miss, what a fortune you are!—A young lady of your fortune!” How was it possible for a girl, thus tutored, not to derive insolence from the consideration of her fortune?

‘ The governess, who had the care of this young lady, was not very likely to enlarge her notions: her only recommendation to such a trust was, that she could jabber-corrupted French without either sense or grammar, and Miss was taught to *parler françoise* in a broad provincial dialect; for this governess had never seen Paris, and perhaps had never been out of the little village where she was born and bred, and conversed only with peasants, till she came to England to teach language and fine breeding to a rich heiress. It was very natural for Lady Manning to make such a choice, who doubtless thought it a great distinction to have a foreigner for governess to her daughter.

‘ Nay, my dear,” interrupted Miss Woodby, “ Lady Manning, in this particular, does not differ from many persons of the first quality, who commit the education of their daughters to low vulgar creatures, merely because they are French; creatures that, in Paris,

Paris, or in any of the chief cities in the provinces, would not be thought qualified for a chambermaid to a woman of any fashion, when driven into England on account of their religion, as they all pretend, though perhaps it is for want of bread in their own country, derive such distinction from their flimsy facks, their powdered hair, and their speaking French, that they are thought the fittest persons in the world to form the manners of young girls of quality. How absurd should we think it in a French woman of quality to entertain an awkward Yorkshire girl with a coarse clownish accent, as English governess to her daughter, to teach her the language, and correct her pronunciation? And yet not one in twenty of the Mademoiselles in the houses of our nobility and our French boarding-schools are better qualified for such an office. But I beg pardon, my dear, for interrupting you so long: I long to hear what sort of a life you lived in this rich despicable family.

'Truly,' said Miss Courteney, 'it was not very agreeable. When Lady Manning and I were alone, she used to entertain me with an account of her forefathers; she reckoned up among them half a dozen sheriffs, three lord-mayors, and a long train of aldermen. She lamented the death of her husband most pathetically; for if he had lived two years longer, he would have been elected lord-mayor, and she would have lived in the Mansion-house, and been queen of the city. These were her words.

'When we were at table, and the servants attending, she used to turn the discourse upon the misfortunes of my father, lament the sad condition to which my mother and I were reduced by his death, express great anxiety about my brother, and enter into a minute discussion of our affairs.

'When there was company present, she would take notice that I was melancholy, and tell me that I must not take misfortunes to heart, and then sigh as if she was extremely affected with them herself; by which she recommended me to her visitors as an object of compassion, and never failed by that means to produce some instances of neglect towards me: so powerfully did that consideration operate upon most minds.

'She would sharply reprehend her daughter for any supposed want of civility to me, and pass over in silence any real one; telling her, that if Miss Courteney had not a fortune, yet she was a gentlewoman as well as herself, and that nobody should be despised for being poor.

'Such were the continued mortifications that I was obliged to endure from this generous benefactress; yet I ought not to call them mortifications, because they only excited my contempt. About that time I received a letter from my brother, in which he informed me that he was going to travel with a young English nobleman, whose governor had died suddenly at Leyden, and whom he was appointed to succeed upon a very advantageous footing, on account of his birth: he desired me to draw upon him for what money I had occasion for.

'I received these insults therefore with the more indifference, as I knew I could put an end to them when I pleased, by quitting Lady Manning's house, which I could now do without any inconvenience to myself; and, foreseeing that this indelicacy in her treatment of me must necessarily end in something too coarse for me to dissemble my resentment, I was willing to stay till she shewed herself in her true colours, which would be my justification whenever I quitted her.

CHAP. II.

WHEREIN FAMILY-PRIDE AWAKENS
THOSE NATURAL AFFECTIONS
WHICH FAMILY-PRIDE HAD SUP-
PRESSED.

IT was not long before I had this opportunity. She desired me one day to walk with her in the garden, having something to communicate to me greatly to my advantage; and, after a profound silence of about ten minutes, she looked archly at me, and asked me if I could guess what she had been doing for me. "Indeed I cannot, Madam," replied I. "Well; then, I will tell you," said she; "nothing less, I assure you, than providing you a husband."—"Indeed!" said I, laughing; "and pray, Madam, who is this intended husband?"—"Come, come," said she, gravely, "be-
fore

"fore I tell you who he is, you must promise to make no silly objections; such as age, not being a fine gentleman, and the like. The person I have in my eye for you is a sober staid man, and blessed with means to support you handsomely, without depending upon any body."—"That indeed is something!" replied I; "but who is this person, Madam?"—"I have a good mind," said she, "to tantalize you a little, by keeping you in suspense: but, in short, the person I mean is honest Mr. Jones."

"Although I expected some very absurd and impertinent proposal, yet my imagination had never reached any thing so ridiculous as this Mr. Jones; for I had had his history from himself some time before. He had been taken by her father out of a parish-school, because he understood writing and accounts, to keep his books for him. Upon his young mistress's marriage, he was advanced to be a clerk in her husband's office; and here, having scraped up a little money, he made some successful ventures in trade, and had acquired about two thousand pounds. After Sir John's death, my lady made him her steward, with a salary of fifty pounds a year; and he was in this honourable and lucrative post when she proposed him as a husband for me."

"My surprize was succeeded by a strong inclination to laugh, which, indeed, I took no pains to suppress. And pray, Madam," said I, "has this grave personage expressed any good liking to me?"

"I hope you are not jesting," said she. "Why, did you expect me to be serious," replied I, "upon such a proposal?"

"Such a proposal, Miss!" repeated Lady Manning, colouring; "if my daughter was in your circumstances, I should not be sorry such a proposal was made to her."—"Very likely, Madam," returned I; "and it might be more proper than to Mr. Courteney's daughter, and the niece of the Earl of——"

"This may look like vanity, my dear Miss Woodby; but I confess I was excessively shocked at her levelling me with her daughter, when riches were out of the question; for I was contented to allow her all the superiority she could derive from them. Lady

Manning made me a snarier answer, and delivered with more calmness than I expected from her."

"If the Earl of——," said she, "behaved more like an uncle to you, Miss, it would be oftener remembered that you are his niece; but, as it is, I do not know whether it may not be an advantage to you to have it forgot; for there are very few gentlemen of small fortunes who would chuse an indigent woman of quality for a wife."

"I hope, however, Madam," said I, "that none but a gentleman will presume to offer himself to me; and I shall take care not to justify my uncle's neglect, by encouraging any improper address."—"You are very much in the right, Miss," said Lady Manning; "one unfortunate marriage in a family is enough."

"Tis well, Madam," replied I, bursting into tears; "you mean my father's, no doubt; but it was no other wife unfortunate than that it had not the sanction of my grandfather's consent: my mother's excellencies justified his choice; and she might have had a fortune too, though not equal to what he might have expected, if it had not been trusted in the hands of a villain, who broke to leave his own children fortunes, as many other villains have done."

"This last hint threw Lady Manning into some confusion; for it was suspected that her grandfather, who was a corn-factor, had done the like: and, whether it was that she was afraid of my speaking still plainer, or that she was really concerned for having given me such just reason to complain of her, she thought fit to beg my pardon for what was past; and assured me, that whatever I might think of her, she was unalterably my friend."

"In my first emotions of resentment, I had resolved to write to Mr. Damer, and acquaint him with the treatment I had met with, which I knew would bring him immediately to my relief; but I considered that my leaving Lady Manning in disgust might have disagreeable consequences; for she would not fail to represent every thing in such a manner as to make me appear in the wrong; and the world seldom espouses the part of the oppressed, because they who oppress have that on their side

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which

‘ which is sure to exculpate them—they are rich. Besides, the summer was now almost past, and she talked of going soon to London, where I could take an opportunity of leaving her without any noise, and of putting myself immediately under my guardian’s protection; but I was delivered from this disagreeable situation sooner than I expected, and by means which I had then no reason to hope for.

‘ Lady Manning was desirous of spending a few weeks at Bath before she returned to London. A lady happened to be there at that time, who, I afterwards learned, was my great aunt by my father’s side, and had followed the example of every branch of his family, in taking no notice of him after his marriage.

‘ This lady, Lady Manning became acquainted with; and not knowing the relation in which she stood to me, she began one day to exclaim against the pride and folly of people, in low circumstances, who expect to be considered on account of their birth, producing me as an instance, and relating how I had refused an honest man whom she had proposed to me for a husband, because he was not a gentleman, repeating my own words with a sneer; and therefore—*Not a proper match for Mr. Courteney’s daughter.*

‘ This being the first time she had named me, Lady Meadows (for it was her) cried out, in some astonishment—“What, Madam, is that pretty young lady,” (so she was pleased to say) “that I saw with you once in the rooms, Mr. Courteney’s daughter?”

‘ Lady Manning answering in the affirmative—“Good Heaven!” said Lady Meadows, “and have I lived to hear one of my family spoken of with such contempt?”

“One of your family, Madam!” interrupted Lady Manning, surprized.

“Yes,” said Lady Meadows, “one of my family, who has done you too much honour to accept of an obligation from you; how could you presume to propose your scoundrel steward for a husband to my niece? But I will take her out of your hands immediately: you shall be paid for her board; my nephew’s daughter shall not lie under an obligation to any upstart cit.”

‘ It is not to be doubted that Lady Manning replied with great bitterness; but Lady Meadows, from whom I afterwards had these particulars, was in too much emotion to listen to her. She immediately quitted the walk, for they were on the Parade; and getting into her chariot, told Lady Manning that she was going to her lodgings to fetch me away.

‘ Thus, my dear Miss Woodby, did I recover a relation, a friend, a benefactress, in a woman, who for many years had had no intercourse with my father, and disclaimed him, as the result of his relations had done, on account of his marriage: she, whose resentment could not be softened by time, whose compassion could not be awakened by distress; she who had silenced the soft pleadings of nature, yet listened to the voice of pride; and, from a sense of the affront that had been offered her family in the husband proposed to me, she did all that benevolence would have suggested to a better mind.

‘ You may imagine I was greatly surprized, when a servant informed me that Lady Meadows was at the door in her chariot, and desired I would come to her. I had often heard my father mention this aunt of his, from whom, before his marriage, he had great expectations. I went down stairs in much confusion of mind, not knowing what this summons could mean, yet presaging some good; and as soon as I appeared, Lady Meadows let down the glass, and desired me to come into the chariot. Her footman instantly opening the door, I got in, and placed myself by her, expecting when she would speak, and anxiously longing for an explanation.

‘ Lady Meadows gazed at me in silence during some moments; then taking my hand—“My dear,” said she, in a tender accent, “you are very like your father. Poor Ned!” added she, with some emotion, “he was not kindly used.” The tears streamed from my eyes at this mention of my father. I observed Lady Meadows was greatly affected. “Oh Nature!” thought I, “why were thy tender feelings suppressed so long?”—“Don’t weep, my dear,” said she; “I will be both father and mother to you.”

‘ Had

‘ Had I been in another place, I should have thrown myself at her feet, to express my gratitude for this affectionate promise. I could not speak at that moment; I took her hand, kissed it, and wet it with my tears. She kindly wiped my eyes with her own handkerchief; then looking again in my face, as if with pleasure—“ You are like your mother too, I suppose,” said she: “ I never saw her; but I have heard that she was very handsome.”

‘ This obliging manner of mentioning my mother, which I so little expected from her, quite subdued me. “ My dear,” said she, “ what is past cannot be helped; you are my daughter now; you shall be no longer obliged to Lady Manning. That woman,” pursued she, rising in her temper as she spoke, “ has herself told me the insolence of her treatment of you.” She then gave me an account of what had passed upon the Parade, as I have already related to you.

‘ Lady Manning thought to have injured me in your opinion,” said I; “ and she has made me happy, by awakening your tenderness for me: I now forgive her for all her insults.”

‘ But I never will forgive her,” interrupted Lady Meadows. “ As soon as we come to my lodgings, you shall send for your cloaths, and never more enter her doors.”

‘ I was very unwilling to part with Lady Manning in this manner, and pressed my aunt to allow me to go and take leave of her civilly; but she positively refused, and I found she could not endure the least contradiction, which is indeed one of her foibles. I therefore contented myself with writing to her, and acquainted her with Lady Meadows’s resolution in my favour; I made the best apology I could for leaving her so suddenly, and expressed some concern at the misunderstanding there was between Lady Meadows and her, which made it impossible for me to wait on her.

‘ Politeness, my dear, is sometimes a great tax upon sincerity. Lady Manning had certainly treated me very ill, and, in strict justice, I was not obliged to shew any respect to a woman who had violated all the laws of hospitality with regard to me: but custom de-

cides arbitrarily in these cases; and persons, in a certain condition of life, make a science of hating one another with all the good-breeding and complaisance imaginable.

‘ Lady Manning, according to this rule, returned a civil answer to my letter, wished me all happiness, and, wherever she went, let loose all the asperity of her tongue against me. One calumny propagated by her hurt me more than the rest: she confidently reported that I had sacrificed my conscience to my interest; and that, upon my aunt’s promising to settle her whole fortune upon me at her death, I had turned Roman Catholic; for Lady Meadows had been perverted to that religion by her husband, and, like all profelytes, was extremely bigotted to her new principles.

‘ I thought it became me to discountenance this report as much as possible; therefore I was more regular than ever in my attendance at church: and although my aunt, after we came to London, would often have engaged me to go to mass with her, intending, no doubt, to work me to her purpose by degrees; yet I constantly and steadily refused to gratify her in this particular; though in every other I studied to oblige her as much as possible. She would often engage me in arguments upon the subject of religion, which I generally strove to evade; and when I found that would not do, I defended myself with great courage, and with so much success, that she would tell me with an air, half smiling, half angry, I was too hard for her, and that she would consign me over to her chaplain.

‘ This chaplain, whose name is Danvers, is a priest of the order of the Jesuits: he had been recommended to Lady Meadows by her late husband, whose memory she adored; and this powerful interest, joined to the Jesuit’s insinuating manners, acquired him so great credit with Lady Meadows, that she governed herself wholly by his advice; and that the great work of her salvation might be perfected, and her every word and action be under his direction, he lived in the house with her, where he ruled in a most arbitrary manner; his absolute empire over the conscience of my lady, rendering

'dering his dominion over all that had any dependance on her as uncontrouled as he could desire.'

Here Henrietta stopped, observing her friend to look at her watch, which produced an exclamation that the reader will find in the following chapter.

CHAP. III.

WHICH INTRODUCES A JESUIT TO THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE READER.

'OH! my dear,' cried Miss Woodby, 'I am in despair to find it is so late, I must leave you now; but I am so impatient to hear the rest of your story, that, if you will give me leave, I will breakfast with you to-morrow, and as soon as my eager curiosity is satisfied, we will go together to Mrs. Egret's.'

She then desired a chair might be sent for; 'And in the mean time,' said she, 'we will step into the shop; I will make a little purchase on purpose to see your landlady, whom you seem to dislike so much.'

'Indeed I do not like her,' replied Henrietta, 'and yet she is mighty civil.'—'Well,' said Miss Woodby, tripping down stairs, 'I'll give you my opinion of her when I have studied her a little.'

Miss Courteney was following her into the shop, when perceiving the young gentleman, who was there the day before, in discourse with Mrs. Eccles, she pulled Miss Woodby by the sleeve, whispering, 'Don't go in now, there is somebody with her.'—'Indeed, but I will,' replied Miss Woodby, who saw the glimpse of a laced coat, for which she had always a violent passion, 'and so shall you likewise.'

Saying this, she pulled Miss Courteney in, and, swimming up to Mrs. Eccles, bid her, with a lively air, show her some ribbands and blond laces.

The young gentleman, as soon as the ladies appeared, made them a profound bow; and, fixing his eyes on Henrietta's face, seemed to contemplate it with astonishment and delight.

Mean time Miss Woodby was playing over a thousand fantastick airs, and uttering as many pretty absurdities, which she had heard admired coming

from the mouths of beauties, without reflecting that she herself was no beauty. Mrs. Eccles perceived her foible immediately, and took occasion, when she was shewing her some new-fashioned caps, to tell her, that such a one would suit the air of her face; that this coloured ribband was most proper to shew the lustre of her eyes; observed that she had wonderful fine hair, and begged to know who cut it.

Henrietta, a little in pain for her friend, to whom personal compliments were by no means proper, endeavoured to relieve the confusion she supposed she was under, by diverting her attention to something else, and asked her opinion of some Dresden work that was lying before them. But Miss Woodby had no leisure to answer her; for the gentleman, conceiving that it was easier to introduce some conversation to her than to Miss Courteney, whose mingled modesty and dignity struck him with awe, addressed a trifling question to Miss Woodby, which she answered with such an affected sprightliness as encouraged him to talk to her with the familiarity of an old acquaintance.

Miss Woodby was excessively delighted with his address to her, and played off all the artillery of eyes, air, and wit, upon him. Happy was it for the young gentleman, who courageously bore all her attacks, that this fire was given from two little grey eyes, over which her forehead hung like a precipice; and that this form, which was thrown into a thousand different attitudes to strike him, was so distorted by nature as to leave little more for affectation to do.

The chair had been waiting half an hour without Miss Woodby's perceiving it, when Henrietta, who was not at all pleased with the figure her friend made, told her, smiling, that she would not let her stay any longer, for fear she should by that means be disappointed of her company at breakfast the next day.

'I vow, my dear, you are in the right,' cried Miss Woodby, 'to send me away; for my aunt is waiting supper for me—I am a giddy creature.' She then desired Mrs. Eccles to put up the things she had bought; for, in the gaiety of her heart, she had bought a great many. Mrs. Eccles obeyed, telling her she hoped she should have the pleasure

pleasure of serving so agreeable a lady again.

The gentleman would hand her into her chair, which Miss Woodby accepted with a very gallant air, after she had assured Miss Courteney aloud, that she would be with her in the morning; and told her in a whisper, that her landlady was a very pretty behaved woman.

Henrietta went up to her chamber directly, to the great disappointment of the young gentleman, who, finding there was no probability of seeing her again that night, went away disburthened of a heart which he had left with the charming stranger.

She was now summoned to supper by Mrs. Eccles, who was full of praises of the young lady her visiter. 'This has been a lucky day to me,' said she, 'for I have let my first floor at a very good price, considering the season of the year.'—'I am glad of it,' said the young lady. 'That is very obliging of you, my dear Miss,' said Mrs. Eccles; 'and you may still have the use of the dining-room when you have company; for my lord will be seldom at home in the day, these lodgings being only to sleep in. But how do you like him? Is he not a mighty agreeable man? Dear soul! not a bit of pride in him!'

'Do you mean the gentleman I saw in the shop?' said Miss Courteney. 'Yes,' returned Mrs. Eccles, 'he is a lord, I assure you.'—'Well,' said Miss Courteney, 'I am glad you are not to lose one lodger without getting another, for I must leave you to-morrow.'—'How!' replied Mrs. Eccles, with an altered countenance, 'I hope you are only in jest.'—'Upon my word I am in earnest,' said Miss Courteney. 'I am sorry for it, Madam,' resumed she, 'but this is very short notice.'

Henrietta was a little surprized at the peevishness with which she spoke these last words, so different from her usual complaisance: but she would not seem to take notice of it, and only told her, that it was not her design to stay more than a few days at this end of the town, having affairs to transact in the city, which would oblige her for her own convenience to take lodgings there.

Mrs. Eccles appeared satisfied with this answer, though a cloud hung upon her brow during the whole time they were at supper, which Miss Courteney shortened

as much as possible, and retired to her chamber, with new prejudices against her landlady, that made her rejoice in the prospect of getting away the next day.

Miss Woodby came according to her promise to breakfast, in a world of spirits; and had scarce taken a seat, when she asked after the charming fellow who entertained her so agreeably in the shop.

Henrietta told her, she saw no more of him; 'for the moment you was gone,' said she, 'I went up stairs: but really, my dear, I wonder you seemed so pleased with his conversation; methought it was very silly and trifling.'

'Oh!' exclaimed Miss Woodby, 'there is an inexpressible charm in the trifling chat of a pretty sensible fellow, when we know he submits to it only to please us women.'—'Truly,' said Miss Courteney, 'your sex is not obliged to you for that compliment. Must a man then talk nonsense to be acceptable to us?'—'Lord! how grave you are, my dear,' said Miss Woodby; 'why, don't you know that I am the veriest coquet in nature, and take an infinite pleasure in making a wise man look and talk like a fool?'

'A coquet, my dear!' interrupted Henrietta, surprized; 'no, surely.'—'Indeed but I am,' replied Miss Woodby; 'and I verily think I should not be in the least concerned to see a hundred men dying of love for me.'—'Indeed!' said Miss Courteney. 'Yes,' indeed, repeated the other; 'but why that stare of astonishment? are these notions so new to you?'—'Why, no,' hesitated Miss Courteney, whose astonishment arose from the contemplation of the figure which uttered all this extravagance, 'I have somewhere met in my course of reading with such fantastical notions, but I cannot say that I ever thought I should hear them avowed by a young lady of your good sense.'—'Oh! your servant for that compliment,' returned Miss Woodby, bowing; 'but on the article of vanity we are all fools. But come, my dear, make your tea, and then resume your story; for I die with impatience to hear it.'

'I wish you would excuse me,' said Henrietta, 'till I am got to Mrs. Egret's, for I shall not be easy till I am out of this house.'—'Why have you such a dislike to this house?' said Miss Wood-

by;

by; 'I protest I think your landlady a mighty civil, obliging woman.'— 'Well, I don't like her,' replied Henrietta; 'she has let her first floor all on a sudden to the gentleman we saw in the shop.'— 'And how does that affect you?' interrupted Miss Woodby.

Henrietta blushed at this question; she was not willing to own that she thought there was some design in his coming, and expected her friend would have made that inference herself; but finding she did not, she endeavoured to divert her attention from the hint she had dropped, by saying she had set her heart upon going to Mrs. Egret's, and had told Mrs. Eccles that she was to leave her to-day.

'That was very imprudently done of you,' said Miss Woodby, 'before you knew whether Mrs. Egret could accommodate you with lodgings; but own the truth now,' pursued she, 'did you not put yourself into a flutter upon hearing the gentleman had taken lodgings here?'

'Why, I cannot help saying I was startled at it,' replied Henrietta, 'and the more when I heard he was a man of quality; for surely these lodgings are much too mean for a person of that rank.'

'Is he a man of quality?' exclaimed Miss Woodby: 'Oh! the dear creature! I protest I am quite in love with him now; I doat on a man of quality. And pray, why should his coming fright you away? Ah! my dear,' said she, smiling archly, 'had I not reason for saying a moment ago, that on the article of vanity we are all fools? Now are you ready to imagine here is a plot between this young nobleman and Mrs. Eccles against your fair self, Poor lady!' pursued she, laughing, 'this presumptuous knight will certainly carry you away.'

'You are in a gay humour to-day,' said Miss Courteney, blushing; 'but, raillery a-part, it imports me greatly not to be known: this lord, as Mrs. Eccles says he is, will no doubt have a great many persons coming after him; I may be seen and discovered; and, if you knew what I have to dread in that case, I am sure you would think it reasonable for me to be desirous of leaving this house.'

'You will be in more danger of a

discovery at Mrs. Egret's,' said Miss Woodby; 'her house is much larger than this, and she is very seldom without people of fashion in it.'— 'But I can keep in my chamber,' said Henrietta. 'And what hinders you from doing so here?' said Miss Woodby. 'Ah! it is as I suspected; you are certainly apprehensive of being conveyed to some island in an immense lake.'

'But, my dear Miss Woodby,' said Henrietta, laughing, 'why, have you changed your mind about my going to Mrs. Egret's?'— 'I have not changed my mind,' replied Miss Woodby; 'I am ready to do what I promised, but it is my opinion that if Mrs. Egret cannot furnish you with a lodging, you will be very safe here, and I will be with you as often as I can.'— 'Ah, my dear,' said Miss Courteney, mimicking the tone she had used to her; 'but come write a line to Mrs. Egret, to know if she has a single room to spare, and I shall be satisfied.'

Miss Woodby immediately complied with her request, and a porter was dispatched to St. James's Street, who soon returned with a billet from Mrs. Egret to Miss Woodby, expressing her concern that she could not accommodate her friend.

'Well,' said Henrietta, when she heard this, 'I find I must be contented to stay here a few days longer; but remember I claim your promise to be with me as often as you can.'— 'That you may depend upon,' said Miss Woodby; 'and now I claim your's to finish your history; I am impatient to hear how you came off with this doughty chaplain.'

CHAP. IV.

IN WHICH OUR HEROINE ENGAGES HERSELF IN A VERY UNEQUAL CONTEST.

'I Must confess,' said Miss Courteney, resuming her narrative, 'that I had no inclination to engage in a religious dispute with a man whose learning and abilities furnished him with so many advantages over me; therefore, whenever he gave the conversation that turn, I generally took refuge in silence, not being willing to hurt

hurt a cause I had so much at heart, by defending it weakly.

However, I was often drawn in to answer by some apparent absurdity advanced by him, which it seemed mighty easy to refute. On these occasions Mr. Danvers would listen to me with wonderful attention, observe the most minute exactness in his reply, as if what I had urged had indeed great force: nay, he would sometimes seem a little pressed by my arguments; pause for a few moments, as if he found it necessary to collect all his strength against so potent an adversary; and, after a well-turned compliment on my understanding, he would resume the argument, in which he never failed to puzzle, though he could not convince me; but always concluded with a declaration that I was too hard for him; and it was well he had the best side of the argument, for nothing but truth could stand against such subtilty of reasoning.

These praises always left me in a very good disposition to renew the subject whenever an opportunity offered. I began to be extremely fond of disputing with the chaplain; and, instead of shunning it, as I used to do, I even invited his opposition.

I have heard it observed, that vanity cheats many a woman out of her honour; I am sure it was well nigh cheating me out of my religion; for this Jesuit, by his insidious praises, had given me such a confidence in my talent of reasoning, that I began to believe, if he did not make a profelyte of me, I should certainly make one of him; and, in my eager pursuit of victory, I sometimes engaged myself beyond my strength, and received such checks, that if my faith was not overthrown, yet it was strangely staggered: but some disgust which I took to the manners of the chaplain preserved me from the poison of his doctrine, and made me lose all my relish for arguing with him.

My aunt, who was certainly very desirous of my conversion, was much pleased with her chaplain's zeal to forward so great a work; and, that she might give no interruption to our discourse, she would often leave us alone for several hours together.

At such times, the Jesuit would be

very lavish of his compliments and praises; of which my person would even come in for a share. He would gaze on my face till he lost the chain of his discourse, and, by his inattention to what he was saying, gave me many advantages over him; and often, while he was pursuing his argument with great warmth, he would lay his hand on mine, hold it for several minutes together, and press it so violently, that I could hardly help crying out.

All this, however, would not have startled me; but one day, taking occasion, upon something I had said, to break into an exclamation of surprize at my prodigious understanding, he kissed my hand in a kind of rapture; and having once taken this liberty, he repeated it several times, to my great confusion and surprize.

There are suspicions, my dear, which, against persons of a certain character, one dare not even avow to one's self. I was shocked, yet would not venture to examine why; I could never endure to be alone with him, yet never asked myself the reason; my eyes, as it were, mechanically avoided his; his civilities were odious to me. If he enquired after my health, I answered him coldly, without knowing I did so; and when he launched into any of his usual praises, I was downright rude to him, yet scarce perceived it myself.

I now so carefully shunned being alone with him, that notwithstanding he sought opportunities of engaging me in private, which heightened my disgust, yet he never could find any. This conduct, if he had any guilt in his heart, must certainly give him cause to think I had detected it; and indeed I soon found, by my aunt's altered behaviour, that he was endeavouring to undermine me in her affection.

The little peevishness I observed in her towards me, I imputed at first to her chagrin at my having disappointed her wishes in not becoming a convert to that religion she professed; but I soon found that she had been made to conceive strange notions of me. She objected to the gaiety of my disposition; she did not like that crowd of lovers, as she phrased it, that followed me, and

and were encouraged by my coquet airs, and the pleasure I shewed in being admired.

It is certain, that the report of the fortune my aunt designed for me, procured me addresses from several men, whom as she did not approve, so neither did I encourage; having, in reality, none of that sort of vanity which is gratified by a great many pretenders of this kind, nor did I feel the least partiality to any one of them; so that I told her it would give me no uneasiness if she forbid their visits for the future, which, since I found they were disagreeable to her, I would have done myself, if I had thought it became me to take that liberty in her house. This declaration would not satisfy my aunt: she had further views; I must marry, and she must chuse a husband for me, without leaving me, in an affair that so nearly concerned my happiness, even a negative voice.

I have no doubt but that the person she pitched upon was recommended to her by the chaplain; he was a Roman Catholick baronet, had a large estate, was not much above sixty years of age, his person just not horrible, and he was not quite a fool. This was the man whom my aunt proposed to me, or rather commanded me to accept; for he had modesty enough not to try to engage my affections, till he had secured her consent, and was admitted in form to make his addresses to me.

My aunt indeed allowed that there was some disproportion in our years; but then he had a good estate, and I was wholly dependent upon her; his person, she acknowledged, was not very amiable, but he was a baronet, and could give me a title. "To be sure," she said, "he was not a man of bright parts, but he would make a good settlement on me;" and concluded with assuring me, that my chearful consent would greatly endear me to her, which I should find by the disposition she would make in her will.

My aunt, having thus anticipated every objection I could make, and, in her opinion, fully answered them all, I thought it would be to no purpose to dispute with her on points already decided; I therefore contented myself with declaring, that I could not like Sir Isaac Darby (for that was his name;) that I should be miserable if I married

him; that I was extremely happy in my present situation, and had no wish to change it.

Lady Meadows, I perceived, was a little offended at this so positive declaration; but I had nothing for it but steadiness. "I expected," said she, "more compliance from that sweetness I have been fond of supposing in your temper; and from your good sense, a greater attention to your own interest." I assured her, that it was and ever should be my sincerest endeavour to avoid offending her; that I would admit no offer but such as she should approve; and that I would guard my heart against any preference which was not authorised by her: more than this I told her was not in my power to promise, for no consideration of interest could prevail upon me to give my hand to a man whom it was impossible for me either to love or esteem.

Finding she listened to me patiently, I urged every argument my imagination could furnish me with, to prove to her that such an engagement, entered into upon pecuniary motives only, could not be happy, and might be very miserable. I begged she would not think of disposing of me in marriage, till I seemed less satisfied with my present happy lot; and that, by giving me no superior duties in domestic life to fulfil, she might entitle herself to all my undivided cares, affection, and assiduity.

My aunt seemed affected with what I said: she told me she had no intention to force my inclination; that, loving me so well as she did, it was natural for her to wish to see me settled; that Sir Isaac Darby was a very advantageous offer; she recommended to me to consider well what I refused, and to conquer my unreasonable dislike of him if possible.

"If it were possible, Madam," replied I, "your command would make me attempt it, but—" "No more buts now, Henrietta," interrupted my aunt; "Sir Isaac dines here to-day; remember I expect you will treat him civilly at least, since he has so great a regard for you."

I smiled, curtsied, and went out of the room where this long conversation had been held, for I heard the chaplain's step in my aunt's dressing-room; and

and this being the hour when he generally joined us, I chose to avoid seeing him then, for fear he should prevail upon her to exact something more than civility from me to the odious wretch, who had thus bartered for me without my consent.

I did not appear in the dining-room till dinner was ready to be served; my antiquated lover approached with a janty air, and a sliding bow; and (O! don't you pity me, my dear) kissed my hand, as he led me to my seat. Nothing but the respect I owed my aunt could have hindered me from laughing at this ridiculous display of gallantry in the old man; for age has no claim to our reverence, if not accompanied by those qualities from whence it derives it's worth. Wisdom, gravity, experience, the triumph of reason over passions, prejudice, and folly; all these we expect to find in fulness of years, and these make it's wrinkles not only respectable but even lovely.

In Sir Isaac Darby, age was contemptible as well as unlovely; he wanted to be young, in spite of time; he talked and laughed aloud; he strutted about the room; he adjusted his bag, for he was dressed up to five and twenty; he hummed a tune: I sat staring with astonishment at him.

From what had passed between my aunt and I in the morning, I had no reason to imagine that Sir Isaac would be treated as a declared and authorised lover; but some time after dinner was over, Mr. Danvers withdrew, and my aunt, upon some trifling pretence, following him, I was left alone with the old baronet. I would instantly have quitted the room; but, remembering that my aunt had required civility of me at least, I resolved not to affront him, by leaving him to himself; and since I was obliged to stay, I would draw some amusement from the ridiculous scene before me.

I know not whether it was from any particular archness in my looks just then, (for I had composed my countenance to a kind of forced gravity) or whether the old man was at a loss in what manner he should form his address; but it is certain, that all his confidence seemed now, for the first time, to forsake him, and he sat silent

during several minutes, stealing a glance at me every now and then; while I, with a formal air, played my fan, and increased his confusion by my silence. At length he quitted his own chair for that which my aunt had sat in, and which was next me; and drawing it still nearer to me, he made a motion to take my hand, which I withdrew as hastily as if a snake had touched it.

This action a little disconcerted him; but taking courage again, after a preludeing hem, he began—"Charming Miss Courteney, I don't doubt but Lady Meadows has informed you of the violence of my—" Here an unlucky cough interrupted his speech, and held him so long, that he grew black in the face; his endeavours to suppress it having, as I believe, almost choaked him. I rose up in a seeming fright, as if I had designed to call for assistance; but finding his cough had ceased, I sat down again at a greater distance than before.

"I fancy the town air does not agree with you, Sir," said I; "it is certainly very bad for asthmatical disorders."

"Oh, Madam!" said he, "this is no asthma. I got a slight cold the other night at Spring Gardens; for we staid very late, and the ground was damp: but I came off better than any of my companions, two or three of whom are still laid up with colds. But tell me, dear Miss Courteney, did you receive favourably the declaration your aunt made in my name? May I hope, or am I doomed to despair?" whined out the superannuated inamorato, with an hideous ogle, which he designed for a languish.

"Oh, good Sir," replied I, excessively shocked at his folly, "these Arcadian strains do not become your wisdom and gravity. My aunt did mention your proposals to me, but I cannot accept them, I have no inclination to change my condition."

"How admirably this pretty seriousness sits on those sweet features!" said the wretch, looking confidently at me, without being in the least mortified with my rebuke. "But, my dear Miss Courteney, you must change your mind—indeed you must—and your condition too, my fair one."

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"Perhaps

"Perhaps I may, Sir," said I.
 "Oh, that charming perhaps!" said he, "it restores me to life."
 "Was there ever any thing so provoking, my dear? I protest I could hardly help abusing the ridiculous old man."
 "I really think, Sir," said I, looking at him with infinite contempt, "that my seriousness would become your age, as well as my youth; but," pursued I, rising, "to put an end to all your hopes, be pleased to know, that I am determined never to give my hand till I can give my heart with it; for I have no notion of being perjured at the altar, and of vowing to love, honour, and obey, when it is impossible for me to do either."

"I went out of the room when I had said these words, leaving the baronet to mumble the ends of his fingers with his gums; for he affected to bite his nails, as some persons who really have teeth do, when they are angry."

"I met my aunt as I was going to my own chamber. "What, Henrietta!" said she, "have you left Sir Isaac alone? I suppose you have treated him rudely; but come, you must return with me."—"I will, if you insist upon it, Madam," said I, "but I had much rather be excused."—"Indeed!" said my aunt, looking a little angrily on me, "and with that grave face too!—but I shall not insist upon it, Miss, and so you may go up to your own room, if you please."

"Although I was very glad to be at liberty to retire, yet my aunt's permission was given in such a manner that I saw she was offended with me for desiring it. I had experienced the obstinacy of her temper on several occasions; and I was convinced that if she set her heart upon marrying me to the baronet, she would use her utmost endeavours to carry her point, and the loss of her favour might probably be the consequence of her disappointment."

CHAP. V.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF SOME DIFFICULTIES OUR HEROINE WAS INVOLVED IN, ARISING FROM AN OLD EXPLODED NOTION, THAT INTEREST OUGHT NOT TO BE

THE SOLE CONSIDERATION IN MARRIAGE.

FULL of these melancholy reflections, I resolved to write to Mr. Damer, acquaint him with what had passed, and intreat his advice in the uneasy and perplexed state of my mind. Not that I had the least intention of being governed by it, if here commended to me compliance with my aunt's commands in favour of the baronet; but this I was well assured, from his good sense and natural rectitude of mind, he would not do, since it could never be supposed that such a man could be my choice; but I was willing to stand clear in his opinion, and pay him the deference that was due to the quality of guardian, which he had so kindly assumed.

"I had been writing near two hours, for I had given him a circumstantial detail of every thing that had passed with regard to the baronet, whose character I treated with great contempt; but, what was worse, my aunt herself did not escape some satirical strokes of my pen for her ready concurrence with the old man's proposals; and although I mentioned her (as it was my duty) with all imaginable love and respect, yet I could not help humorously rallying upon some of her notions, which were really odd enough, and I placed them in the most glaring light."

"The prodigious length of my letter first gave me notice that I had been a long time thus employed; and, looking at my watch, I found it was past our usual hour for tea, and wondered that I had not been summoned down stairs. I therefore made haste to conclude my letter, that I might send it to the post, when my aunt unfortunately entered the room. I started up from my chair when I saw her; and, hastily crushing the letter all in my hand, I put it into my pocket, not without betraying some signs of confusion."

"So, Henrietta," said my aunt, "have I caught you?"—"Caught me!" "Madam," said I, considering whether she might not have been looking over my shoulder while I was writing so saucily about her; for guilt, like love, makes every thing seem possible that we fear. "Yes," said she, "have you

"you not been writing? Nay, don't deny it," pursued she, for I hesitated, and knew not what to say, lest she should desire to see my letter; "it is no wonder that poor Sir Isaac Darby was rejected with so much scorn, when there is a favoured lover with whom you correspond privately."

"Bless me, Madam," cried I, "who has told you so? I correspond privately with a favoured lover! This is some cruel calumny invented by an enemy, to deprive me of your good opinion."—"Well," said my aunt, "shew me the letter you conveyed so hastily into your pocket upon my appearance, and then I shall know what to think."

"You never, Madam," replied I, "used to desire to see my letters; nor would you now, but in consequence of some suspicion very unfavourable to me."—"That suspicion," interrupted my aunt, "whatever it is, will be greatly strengthened by your refusing to shew me what you have been writing."

"Surely, Madam," replied I, "that is not just; I may have been writing to Mr. Damer, or to my brother."—"To your brother," said my aunt, "I am certain you was not writing, because you have not heard from him for several months, and don't know how to direct to him;" which indeed was but too true. "It is possible that you were writing to Mr. Damer; but why refuse to shew me your letter? you can have no transactions with him that I ought not to be acquainted with: but I am persuaded that letter was not designed for Mr. Damer; and there needs no more to convince me that you are carrying on a private, and therefore an improper correspondence, than your thus obstinately refusing to shew it me."

"My aunt had reason for what she said: nothing was more easy, if I was really innocent, than to shew her the letter, which would remove her suspicions; but this, as I had managed that fatal letter, it was impossible for me to do. By not shewing it, I confirmed those suspicions she had so unjustly conceived, which might indeed have disagreeable consequences; but, by shewing it, I was sure to incur her resentment for the liberties I had taken with her."

"How did I that moment inwardly regret my vanity, which had suffered me to rally the faults of a person on whom I so absolutely depended, merely to display my wit! I was so vexed at the dilemma to which I had reduced myself, that I burst into tears."

"Oh! I see how it is," said my aunt; "keep your letter, Henrietta, I am convinced sufficiently." She hurried out of my chamber at these words. Shocked to the soul at having thus incurred the imputation of entertaining a secret lover, I went after her, resolving in that first emotion to shew her the letter, and rather be thought ungrateful to her, than guilty of an imprudence so disadvantageous to my character; but she was already at the bottom of the stairs, and I had time to make new reflections which prevented my former purpose.

"I considered, that since there was no foundation for her fears of my listening to a private address, I might easily find means to undeceive her, and justify myself; but if I shewed her a letter, in which she was mentioned with so great freedom, I might possibly never be able to remove those ill impressions of me which she would doubtless receive, and I should be all my life branded for ingratitude."

"I was so terrified at this thought, that I resolved to put it out of my power to expose myself to such a misfortune, by destroying the fatal letter, which I did with a precipitation that left no time for second thoughts. When this was over, I expected to have found myself more calm and easy, but it was quite otherwise. I had given foundation to believe that I was engaged in a love-intrigue; for surely all clandestine addresses may be termed so, since there is too much mystery, contrivance, and little arts, necessary to them, not to give great pain to a delicate mind. I burst into tears at the reflection. My aunt's woman, who had a very tender regard for me, came into my chamber, and, finding me so disordered, begged to know what had happened."

"I related every thing that had passed between my aunt and I, but did not own to all the little freedoms I had taken with her in my letter; yet said enough to convince her, that I could not well show it to my aunt."

“ Mrs. White, for that was her name, was very much concerned for my situation: she told me, that her lady and Mr. Danvers were in close conference. “ It is certainly he,” said she, “ who has infused these suspicions into my lady, which, by this unfortunate circumstance of the letter, are now confirmed.” She gave me such plain hints of the chaplain’s selfish dispositions and designs, that it seemed highly probable he would spare no artifices to lessen my aunt’s affection for me; for, since he had failed in making me a convert, which perhaps might have answered other views, he was desirous of keeping my aunt entirely to himself, and so manage her conscience, which he had the direction of, as that holy mother-church and he might divide her spoils.

“ All this considered, my condition seemed so dangerous, that I begged Mrs. White to send a porter with a message from me to Mr. Damer, desiring to see him; for I resolved to regulate my conduct on this occasion wholly by his advice. She left me to do what I had desired her; and I remained alone in my chamber till nine o’clock, at which time I was summoned to supper.

“ I found only my aunt and Mr. Danvers; I was a little confused; for knowing what suspicions I laboured under in my aunt’s mind, I thought I had the air of a guilty person, and I felt that I blushed, and blushed the more for that reason.

“ My aunt looked very coldly upon me; Mr. Danvers had the appearance of one that was very much concerned that all was not well between us. My aunt scarce spoke three words during supper; it was not my part surely to talk much; and Mr. Danvers accommodated himself to the present temper of my aunt; so that this was a very gloomy meal.

“ When the cloth was removed, I was going to withdraw, for it seemed as if my presence was a restraint upon my aunt; but I considered that such a step, being unusual, would imply a consciousness of something wrong in me, and that being innocent, it was my part to seek an explanation. I therefore addressed myself to my aunt, and begged she would give me an op-

portunity of clearing myself, by telling me who had poisoned her mind with suspicions to my prejudice.

“ The chaplain was about to leave the room upon my entering on this subject. “ There is no necessity, Sir,” said I, “ for your retiring; I dare say the cause of my aunt’s displeasure against me is no secret to you. My aunt has been told that I receive addresses from some man in private, and that I correspond with him: I declare this to be absolutely false; and I beg to know from whom you had your information, Madam,” said I, again directing myself to her, “ that I may refute this calumny: I am very confident the person who has thus maliciously injured me, will not dare to maintain the falsehood to my face.”

“ Whether the chaplain thought this was meant for him, I know not; but although he had continued standing, as if he intended to leave us to ourselves, yet I had no sooner uttered these last words than he resumed his seat immediately, as if he would shew me he was not in the least affected by them; but I observed that he fixed his eyes upon my aunt, and expected her answer with some emotion.

“ Before I comply with your condition,” said my aunt, “ do you, Henrietta, agree to mine; let me see that letter you wrote to-day.” I looked at the chaplain; I saw an alteration in his countenance, he was evidently more composed. “ Oh!” thought I, sighing, “ how great would my triumph be, if I had this letter to show, and could show it without fear!”

“ You hesitate, Henrietta,” pursued my aunt; “ why, if that letter was not to a lover, why do you refuse to produce it?”—“ I declare, Madam,” said I, “ upon my word and honour, that the letter was to Mr. Damer.”—“ Well, let me see it,” said my aunt, “ and I shall be satisfied.”—“ I cannot show it to you, Madam,” replied I, in a faltering accent, for I dreaded the inference that would be drawn from what I was going to confess; “ I have torn it.”—“ Well,” said my aunt, with a calmness that cost her some pains to maintain, “ and why did you tear it? it was not written to be torn, that is certain. But I will answer for you, niece, you tore it that I might not

"not see it; and why might not I see it if it was to Mr. Damer?"—"Again I protest," said I, "that it was to him; but I did not chuse to let you see it; it was a long letter, full of impertinencies: you would have thought I was very free in my observations on some particular persons, more free than became me perhaps. You might have been offended, and I tore it to prevent your seeing it."

My aunt looked down, paused, and seemed not wholly dissatisfied with my manner of accounting for the reluctance I shewed to deliver my letter to her; but before she would declare herself, it was necessary she should consult her oracle, and that could not be done before me. She therefore put an end to the conversation, by ringing the bell for her woman. I attended her to her chamber, at the door of which she bade me good night, telling me, she would talk further with me in the morning.

I endeavoured to make Mrs. White comprehend, by a look I gave her unobserved, that I wished to speak to her; and accordingly she came to me, after my aunt was in bed, and delivered the answer the porter had brought from Mr. Damer. He was out of town, but expected back in a week or two, was what the servants told him.

Mrs. White repeated her offers of service to me, but dropped some expressions which shewed she would be glad to be assured that I really had no secret engagement which might justify my aunt's concern.

These doubts, hinted with great respect, were so far from being resented by me, that I conceived the better opinion of her discretion, and confided absolutely in her sincerity. I made her quite easy with regard to the subject of her fears; and she repaid this condescension with the kindest assurances of attachment to me and care of my interests.

I went to bed, full of hope that I had in part removed my aunt's suspicions; and relying on my innocence, I was persuaded I should soon restore myself to her good opinion; but innocence is not always a security to it's possessor, because malice attains it's ends by arts, which a good mind cannot conceive, and therefore is unable to guard against.

Mrs. White informed me in a whisper,

as I was going into my aunt's dressing-room next morning, where we always breakfasted, that her lady and the chaplain had been talking together for half an hour. I drew no favourable omen from this intelligence, nor from my aunt's looks, which were very cold and constrained.

When breakfast was over, and Mr. Danvers had withdrawn, I expected she would enter into some conversation with me on the subject of the letter; but finding she talked of indifferent things, I took occasion to mention it myself, and begged to know if she had any doubts still remaining in her mind.

"Surely," replied my aunt, "you think I am a person that can be very easily imposed upon."—"Then you are resolved, Madam," said I, with some peevishness, (for indeed I was horribly vexed to find her so strongly prejudiced) "to believe I encourage a clandestine address, notwithstanding every appearance to the contrary."

"No indeed," interrupted my aunt, "I am not so unreasonable, Miss; it is because there are very strong appearances against you, that I am forced to believe what you would not have me—That letter, Henrietta—But no more on this subject at present: I am going to my house near Windsor Forest to-morrow; we shall there have leisure enough to talk over this affair, and there I shall open my mind freely to you." I curtsied, and was silent.

My aunt took me with her to pay some morning visits, and seemed to be in very good humour; but her words, that she would open her mind freely to me at Windsor, gave me a great deal of anxiety. I did not doubt but I was to be pressed again on the subject of Sir Isaac Darby, and I was prepared for an obstinate resistance; but I was apprehensive that this resistance to my aunt's will, meeting with the unaccountable suspicions she had entertained, would infallibly ruin me with her.

"O my brother!" thought I, "why are you not here to countenance and protect me? or why have you so long neglected me, as to leave me in suspense whether I have a brother or not!"

This thought, and several others no less painful, spread an air of pensiveness and melancholy on my countenance, which my aunt, as I perceived, by some hints that dropped from her,

inter-

interpreted to my disadvantage. In short, my dear, she imputed my perverseness to the concern I was under at leaving town, as I could not expect to have many opportunities of seeing at Windsor this lover who had possession of my heart.

'You cannot imagine, Miss Woodby, how much I suffered in being obliged to restrain my indignation at being thus treated; to have a phantom of a lover conjured up to tease me with, and to combat suspicions which had not the least foundation but in prejudice and caprice, against which plain truth and reason were very unequal arms: for how should reason remove what would never have been admitted, if reason had not been first set aside? Nothing was ever more improbable than that I should have a secret lover: I never went any where without my aunt; her visitors were mine; I could see nobody without her knowledge: how was this engagement formed? But her chaplain had doubtless assured her, that I had a secret engagement, and she piously believed him, in contradiction to her own judgment: this was one of those cases that required an implicit faith; and in matters of faith, you know, Roman Catholics are not permitted to exercise their reason.

'We set out next morning for Windsor: the chaplain and my aunt's woman being in the coach, the conversation was wholly upon indifferent things. After dinner was over, my aunt took me into her closet, and entered into a long discourse, which it would tire you to repeat—but the substance of it was my unhappy situation when she took me out of the hands of Lady Manning; her tenderness for me; the great things she designed to do for me, nothing less than making me her sole heir; the folly of marrying for love, exemplified in my father's marriage; her fears that I was going to throw myself away on some young fop, who would make me miserable; Sir Isaac Darby's generous passion for me, his great estate, the handsome settlements he proposed to make; and, lastly, the pleasure I would give her, by suiting in this case my inclinations to my interest.

'To all this I answered very particularly: I acknowledged she had shewn a parental tenderness for me, and I had

paid her, and ever would pay her, I said, the duty and obedience due from a child to a parent; that in the article of marriage, my natural parents would certainly have allowed me a negative voice, which was all I claimed now, since I was absolutely resolved not only never to marry without her consent, but not to admit of any address which she disapproved. I begged her never to propose Sir Isaac Darby to me again, because my heart wholly rejected him; though at the same time I protested (as I might well do) that my affections were entirely disengaged.

"All your asseverations," replied my aunt, who had listened to me with many signs of impatience, "signify nothing without you marry Sir Isaac Darby; and by that only shall I be convinced that your head does not run upon some wild showy fellow, who will make your heart ache.

"Here," continued she, "is a baronet of an ancient family, a large estate, of good morals, not disagreeable in his person—but what is person in a man, who loves you, who will make you a large jointure, who gives you a title, place, equipage, all that a prudent sensible woman can desire, and you refuse him? Grant that he is older than you, he has the more wisdom." (O my dear, how difficult it was for me to forbear laughing here.) "But you are not in love with him—let me tell you, Henrietta, that is not a plea for a young woman of delicacy. What, is it not possible for you to make a good wife to an honest gentleman, without bringing with you all that romantick passion which forces girls to jump out of windows to get to their fellows! and, for the sake of a man who possibly a few weeks before was an absolute stranger to them, break through every tie of natural affection, and, to be a wife, be contented to be neither daughter, sister, nor niece?"

'I was going to speak. My aunt in a peremptory manner laid her hand on my mouth. "I will not hear a word more," said she, "on this subject; if you refuse to give your hand to Sir Isaac, I know what I am to think. I allow you two days to consider of it. Hitherto I have treated you as my own child; if you comply, you shall find me a mother; if not, I am only your

"your aunt; and you know how some who stand in that degree of relation to you behave." This was pretty plain, my dear; I was so shocked that I suffered my aunt to go out of the closet without making any answer; and retired to my own chamber to weep in freedom.

CHAP. VI.

IN WHICH OUR HEROINE IS VERY REASONABLY ALARMED.

IT was indeed true that my father's family took no notice of me, notwithstanding the applications that had been made to them; and when my aunt Meadows introduced me at my uncle's the Earl of —, I was received so coldly by him and his lady, that I inly resolved never to expose myself to such a mortification again; and my aunt entered so far into my just resentment, as never to press me to make them a second visit.

My brother was abroad; if living, he neglected me; and perhaps I had no brother; for how else could I account for so long a silence in one who seemed to have such tender affections? I had no resource but in Mr. Damer's friendship, and he was at this time unluckily at too great a distance to be of any use to me. I saw plainly that I must either accept Sir Isaac Darby, or be thrown back into my former indigence and dependence. Dreadful alternative! But, the man considered, was there room to pause long?

My imagination suggested to me every possible ill consequence of the loss of my aunt's favour; but, weighed against the misery of such a marriage, they all seemed light. Yet, would you think it, my dear, amidst the many real evils I had reason to apprehend by disobliging my aunt, one trifling circumstance dwelt strongest upon my mind, and that was the occasion of triumph I should give to Lady Manning, who would exult over my fallen expectations and return to indigence? I was ashamed of my own weakness when I found this thought capable of giving me so much pain; and in the contemplation of greater misfortunes which were likely to be my lot, I

fought to blunt my sense of these lesser ones, which were the necessary consequences of them.

Towards evening Mrs. White threw herself in my way, as I was walking pensive in the garden. She told me, that my aunt was full of hopes that I would comply; that Sir Isaac was to be invited the next day; and that it was expected the generosity of his proposals with regard to settlements, the rich presents of jewels which he would offer, and his resolution to agree to every thing I desired, would make such an impression on my mind, as to induce me to give a free and willing consent. Mrs. White added, that since my aunt was so determined upon concluding this match, she wished I could conquer my aversion to it; for she feared that my absolute refusal would so irritate her, that she might be easily persuaded to take some violent resolution against me; "And there is one," said she, "who will spare no pains to bring that to pass."

I replied, that nothing which could befall me from the loss of my aunt's favour, was to be dreaded so much as being the wife of Sir Isaac Darby, and that my resolution was fixed. Mrs. White sighed, shrugged her shoulders, and hastened from me for fear of being observed, seeming, as I thought, to believe my case desperate.

When she was gone, I considered, that if I accepted of the two days my aunt had given me to come to a resolution, I should be exposed during that time to the odious courtship of Sir Isaac, whose presence was, it seems, judged necessary to influence me: I therefore determined to declare myself immediately, and plunge at once into the distresses that awaited me.

I left the garden instantly, and went in search of my aunt. As soon as I entered the room where she was, she laid down a book she had been reading, and looked earnestly at me, seeming, by my countenance, on which I believe was impressed the agitation of my mind, to expect something extraordinary.

"You have indulged me, Madam," said I, "with two days to consider of your proposal with regard to Sir Isaac Darby; but so long a time is not necessary: were any thing left at stake

"stake than the future happiness of my life, you should find me incapable of opposing your will; but in this case it is not possible for me to obey you. Judge of my aversion to that man, when I protest to you, that if death or his hand was an alternative that I must chuse, I would without hesitation prefer death as the lesser hardship."

"This determined speech seemed to surprise my aunt, though I think she had no reason to expect I could ever be prevailed upon to marry Sir Isaac."

"You are an undone girl," said she, after a pause of near three minutes; "I believe your father's folly is hereditary to you. I have done my duty. Your obstinacy be upon your own head."

"I confess I was greatly affected with her calm resentment, so likely to be lasting: I burst into tears; she went out of the room, I followed her into another, where Mr. Danvers was sitting. As soon as I perceived him, I hastily withdrew, for I was not willing to be seen by him in that state of dejection. I retired to my own room, and there, after I had relieved my mind by another flood of tears, I endeavoured to soften my own apprehensions of what might be the effects of having disoblged the only relation who would own me, and collected all my fortitude to enable me to bear the worst that could happen. But that worst, my dear, proved so terrible to my frightened imagination, that, to avoid it, I have taken a very imprudent and dangerous step; and whither it will lead me, Heaven knows, for my heart forebodes some fatal consequence from it."

"Lord bless me!" said Miss Woodby, after escaping such an odious husband as Sir Isaac, was any thing worse to be feared!"

"Ah!" cried Miss Courteney, "but it was not certain whether I should escape him; for if my aunt's scheme had taken place, I had every thing to fear."—"What could your aunt's scheme be?" said Miss Woodby, impatiently. "Mr. Danvers's rather," said Miss Courteney; "and it's being his, made it more formidable."

"My aunt seemed so easy and cheerful at supper, and spoke to me so kindly, that all my gloomy apprehensions vanished, and I was happy in

the thought that I should preserve her favour without becoming the wife of Sir Isaac Darby; but I was soon undeceived. Mrs. White tapped at my door, after she had put my aunt to bed; I let her in, and told her, in a rapture of joy, how favourably my aunt seemed disposed, and that I should no longer be persecuted about the odious baronet. "O Miss!" said she, "I am afraid this calm foretells a storm."—"A storm!" repeated I, "what do you mean?"

"I always dreaded," said she, "that Mr. Danvers would use his power with my lady to your disadvantage; but who could have imagined that he would prevail upon her to send you to France, and lock you up in a nunnery?"

"How!" exclaimed I, almost breathless with terror and surprise: "Confound me in a nunnery! Is it possible? How came you to know this?"

"By the strangest chance in the world," replied Mrs. White. "I am not used to listen, I scorn it; but some words that fell from the chaplain, alarmed me on your account, and I resolved, if possible, to know what he was driving at. This evening," pursued she, "I went to my lady, to take her directions about some laces I was making up for her. I found the chaplain with her: they seemed to be in deep discourse; and my lady, as if angry at being interrupted, bid me, in a hasty manner, come to her another time. I went away immediately; and, just as I shut the door, I heard the chaplain say, 'Depend upon it, Madam, there is no other way to preserve her from ruin.'"

"Certainly," thought I to myself, "this must concern Miss Courteney; I put my ear to the key-hole, and heard my lady answer, 'But shall I not be called a tyrant, for sending my niece to a convent, contrary to her inclinations?'"

"The chaplain made a long speech, which I could not distinctly hear; but he told her she must make a sacrifice of such idle censures to God; that it was her duty to endeavour to save a soul; that you were in a state of perdition; and oh, my dear Miss! but that I cannot believe, he assured her you would throw yourself away upon the idle fellow (those were his words)

“ words) that you were in love with, if not prevented by bolts and bars.

“ In the end my lady seemed determined, and they consulted together about the means they should use to entrap you into a convent. My lady proposed making a tour to Paris, by way of amusement, to take you with her, and leave you in some monastery. Mr. Danvers, I found, objected to that; he desired she would leave the affair wholly to his management, and said he would think of some expedient that would be less troublesome to her. I did not stay to hear any more; for I was apprehensive of some of the servants coming that way, and discovering me at so mean a trick as listening.”

“ Good God!” cried I, “ what shall I do? What shall I do?” repeated I passionately, in the anguish of my mind. “ My guardian is not in town! to whom shall I apply for advice and assistance in this extremity! I may be hurried away to this horrid confinement when I least expect it.”

“ That is impossible,” said Mrs. White; “ forewarned forearmed, as the saying is. Since you know what is intended against you, you must be upon your guard; you cannot be carried away against your will.”

“ M s. White did not appear to me to have a very just sense of the danger I was exposed to; for what will not bigotry attempt! I was glad, therefore, when she left me to my own reflections; which she did, after begging me to be composed, and not to discover the manner in which I came by the intelligence she had given me.

“ The latter part of her injunction I faithfully promised to perform; but oh! my dear Miss Woodby, how was it possible for me to be composed amidst such dreadful apprehensions? To be locked up in a gloomy monastery, perhaps for ever; exposed to the persecutions of superstitious zeal! but this was not the worst of my fears. To be consigned over, perhaps, to the care of a wolf in sheep’s cloathing, who had already shocked my delicacy with freedoms, that, proceeding from such a man, in such a character, might well awaken the most frightful suspicions.”

“ Truly,” said Miss Woodby, “ that seemed to be the worst part of your danger; for I don’t like this Jesuit at

all; every thing may be dreaded from a hypocrite; but, as to the being shut up in a convent, there is no great matter in it. Such beauty as yours would have soon engaged some adventurous knight in your cause, who would have scaled the walls to have delivered you. Oh, what a charming adventure! I protest I would submit to a few months confinement in such a place, for the pleasure of being delivered from it in so gallant a manner.”

“ Sure you are not in earnest,” said Henrietta. “ Indeed but I am,” replied Miss Woodby. “ Well,” resumed Miss Courteney, “ you have very whimsical notions; but I assure you none of these entered into my head: the loss of liberty seemed to me so frightful a misfortune, that I was almost distracted with the idea of it.

“ The first thought that occurred to me, and which indeed was the most natural, was to prevent my aunt from carrying her designs into execution, by leaving her. I might well imagine she would use violence to detain me, if I attempted it openly; therefore it was necessary to steal myself away, and this has the air of an adventure you must own; but as I had no confidant in this design, no gallant youth to assist me in my escape, and did not even make use of a ladder of ropes, or endanger breaking my neck, I am afraid this adventure is not in a taste high enough for you.”

“ Oh, you are rallying me!” said Miss Woodby; “ but I long to know how you escaped. No confidant! how could you manage so arduous an undertaking by yourself?”

“ With great ease, I assure you,” said Miss Courteney; “ and I don’t think you will allow it to be an escape, when I tell you I walked peaceably out of a door, not without some trepidation however, which arose less from the fear of a pursuit, than the consciousness that I was taking a step which every young woman of delicacy will if possible avoid.

“ As I have already told you, I instantly resolved upon leaving my aunt; but where should I seek an asylum? Mr. Damer, whose protection I might have requested with honour, was not in town; my brother was abroad; none of my father’s relations would

receive me; I had no acquaintances but such as were my aunt's, to whom any application would have been very improper, as I should have found very strong prejudices to combat with, it being a received maxim among persons of a certain age, that young people are always in the wrong; besides, one seldom meets with any one who has not that littleness of soul which is mistaken for prudence, and teaches that it is not safe to meddle with other people's affairs; which narrow notion prevents many a good office, many a kind interposition: so that we seem to live only for ourselves.

My perplexed mind could suggest no better expedient to me, than to seize the first opportunity that offered to go to London, and there conceal myself in a private lodging till Mr. Damer's return, who I doubted not would take me under his protection. Before I had fixed upon this resolution, great part of the night was wasted; so that I lay later than usual the next morning. When I went down to breakfast, I found my aunt dressed, and her coach ordered. She took notice that my eyes looked heavy; I told her I had a violent head-ach, which indeed was true: she said it was a cold, and bid me keep myself warm.

"I am going to Richmond," added she; "it will be late before I return to dinner; therefore let the cook get you a chicken when you chuse to dine, and don't walk out to increase your cold."

My heart leaped so when I found I was to be left at home, that I was afraid my emotion was visible in my countenance. My aunt, however, did not observe it; for, apparently, she had no suspicion that I knew any thing of her design to send me to a convent, and therefore she could not possibly guess my intention to leave her. But she certainly over-acted her part, all on a sudden to drop her favourite scheme, the marrying me to Sir Isaac Darby; and, when I might reasonably expect that my obstinate refusal to comply with her desires would create some coldness in her towards me, to find her not only free from all resentment, but even particularly kind and obliging: sure this was sufficient to raise doubts in my mind, that something

more than ordinary was at the bottom of all this affability.

It often happens that cunning over-reaches itself; for it seldom hits a medium, and generally does too much or too little. My aunt's behaviour would have led me to suspect that some design was forming against me; but if it had not been for Mrs. White's information, I should never have been able to discover what that design was, for my own penetration would have gone no farther than to suggest, that some scheme was laid to bring about my marriage with Sir Isaac Darby; but this fear would have been sufficient to have winged my flight; so that the art my aunt made use of to lull me into security, proved the very foundation of my doubts.

I had a new palpitation of the heart when I saw the chaplain follow my aunt into the coach. "Sure!" thought I. "Heaven approves of my design to get away, since so many circumstances concur to make it practicable." It was natural, my dear, as my religion was in danger from the persecutions preparing for me, to think Heaven interested in the success of my intended escape.

There is certainly something very pleasing in supposing one's self, on certain occasions, the peculiar care of Providence. A Roman Catholic would have made little less than a miracle of so favourable a concurrence of circumstances. However, I suppressed this rising folly of spiritual vanity, and employed my thoughts in contriving how to get to town with convenience and safety, without expecting any supernatural assistance.

Here Miss Woodby broke in upon the fair narrator, with an exclamation that will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. VII.

IN WHICH HENRIETTA CONCLUDES HER HISTORY.

"OH! my dear," interrupted Miss Woodby, laughing, "you have given an excellent name to a species of folly, which at once excites one's laughter and indignation. I know an old lady who is a constant frequenter of the chapel in Oxford Road, that

has arrived to such a height of spiritual vanity, as you justly term it, that she fancies Providence is perpetually exerting itself in miracles for her preservation, and that her most inconsiderable actions are under the immediate direction of Heaven; for she will tell you with surprising meekness and humility, that, unworthy as she is, she is in high favour with God; if she happens to stumble against a stone without falling, she says, with a smile of conscious satisfaction, "To be sure God is very good to me." According to her, *God acts by partial, not by general laws*. And should it cease raining immediately before she is to go out, either to church or a visit, it is all one, she supposes that Providence is at that moment at work for her, and has cleared the skies that she may walk with conveniency; for she cannot always purchase a coach or a chair, half of her little income being appropriated to the preachers, from whose doctrine she has imbibed these self-flattering ideas.

"Oh!" said Miss Courteney, laughing, "you have heightened the colouring of this picture exceedingly."

"Upon my word I have not," said Miss Woodby; "and—but that I am not willing to interrupt your story so long, I could give you an hundred proofs of this odd species of pride; for I assure you, my dear, the haughtiest beauty in the drawing-room, amidst a crowd of adorers, and in the fullest display of airs and graces, has not half the vanity of one of these saints of Whitefield's or Wesley's creation."

"I really pity the poor woman you mentioned," said Henrietta; "she appears to me to be very far from attaining to any degree of perfection: for may it not be supposed that this unreasonable confidence will lead her to neglect many duties very essential to a good Christian? For I have heard it observed, that the preachers of that sect chiefly declaim against fashionable follies; and, according to them, to dress with elegance, to go to a play or an opera, or to make one at a party of cards, are mortal sins; mean time poor mortals are wholly neglected, and superstition is made an equivalent for a virtuous life."

"Yes a waster," replied Miss Woodby; "who is greatly admired by our sex,

and who in his works pays court to all religions, carrying himself so evenly amidst them, that it is hard to distinguish to which he most inclines, has introduced these modern saints reclaiming a woman who had led a very vicious life, and doing more than all the best orthodox divines had done; and he has not thrown away his compliment. I dare say this numerous sect has bought up an impression of his book; and is not the Third Edition upon the title-page a very good return to it? Oh! my dear, there is no vanity like the vanity of some authors: it is not to be doubted but if there were muskmen enough in the kingdom to add a unit more to the account of those editions, but we should find him introducing the Alcoran making profelytes from luxury.—But how have we wandered from your story! You are still at Windsor; I long to hear the rest."

"I assure you, my dear," said Miss Courteney, sighing, "I have not been sorry for this little interruption; it has given some relief to my mind; for I know not how it is, but the recollection of this period is painful to me; and yet, under the same perplexity, and with the same apprehensions, I should certainly act again as I have done. I think I told you that Mr. Danvers went in the coach with my aunt; a circumstance with which I had reason to be rejoiced, as it greatly facilitated my escape. I was still lingering over the tea-table, uncertain in what manner I should perform my little journey, when Mrs. White came into the room: she was apprehensive that I should be uneasy at my aunt's and the chaplain's excursion together, as supposing it was to settle something relating to their scheme; and therefore made haste to inform me, that my aunt had been summoned to Richmond by a message from a Roman Catholick friend of her's, who was dangerously ill there; and desired to see her, together with Mr. Danvers, who was her ghostly father, as they term it."

"Mrs. White continued to talk to me on the subject of my aunt's design, while I was considering whether it would be proper to make her the confidant of my intended flight to London, and engage her to procure me some vehicle to carry me thither. But it was

as possible.

possible she might not approve of my leaving my aunt so suddenly, in which case I should find it difficult to get away: besides, I did not think it reasonable to involve her in the consequences of my flight, by making her privy to it; and that the only way to enable her to justify herself to my aunt was not to make her guilty. I therefore resolved to steal out of the house, and go as far as I could on foot, not doubting but chance would throw some carriage in my way, in which I might finish my journey; and, to gain all the time I could, I told Mrs. White, that my anxiety had hindered me from sleeping all night; that I was not well, and would go to my chamber and try to get some repose, desiring her not to disturb me.

Having thus got four hours at least before me, I resolved to write a short letter to my aunt before I went. In this letter I told her, that having accidentally discovered her intention of sending me to a convent abroad, my terrors of such a confinement had forced me to throw myself under the protection of Mr. Damer; that I hoped, through his mediation, to convince her I had been guilty of no imprudences which could merit such severe usage as a punishment, and was not so unsettled in my religion as to be perverted by that or any other means. I begged her to believe that, except in that article, and in marrying contrary to my inclinations, I would pay her the same obedience as to a parent; but that I would rather submit to the lowest state of poverty, than marry a man whom I could neither love nor esteem; or change the religion in which I was bred, and with which I was entirely satisfied. I concluded with earnestly intreating to be restored to her good opinion, which I assured her I would always endeavour to deserve.

Having sealed and directed this letter, I put it into one of my dressing-boxes, not doubting but, as soon as I was missing, every thing that belonged to me would be searched for letters, in hopes of farther discoveries. I next tied up some linen in a handkerchief, and with an aching heart sallied out of my chamber, and crossed a passage-room which had steps leading to the garden. As soon as I had got

out of the back-door, which opened into the forest, I concluded myself safe from discovery; and mended my pace, having no difficulty in finding my way, because I pursued the road which I had often traversed in a coach or a chaise.

You will easily imagine my mind was full of melancholy reflections; and indeed so entirely was I engrossed by them for near an hour, that I did not perceive I was tired, till I grew so faint I was hardly able to move a step farther. I had now got into the open road, and it being about the time when I might expect to see some of the stage-coaches from Windsor pass that way, I sat down under the shade of a large tree, at some distance from the road, impatiently wishing for the sight. All this time I had not been alarmed with the fear of meeting with any insult, for I had seen no one from whom I could apprehend any such thing; but I had scarce enjoyed this comfortable shelter three minutes, when I perceived two ill-looking fellows, as I thought them, making towards me with all the speed they were able. I started up in inconceivable terror, looking round me to see if any help was near if they should assault me, when I fortunately discovered the stage-coach; and being now eased of my fears, I resumed my station, till it was come near enough for me to speak to the driver. The two fellows who had given me such a terrible alarm, stopped short upon seeing the coach, and I really believe I had an escape from them.

I called out to the coachman as soon as he could hear me. You know, my dear, the difficulties I found in getting admission. Little did those good women, who refused it, imagine that, to avoid a slight inconvenience to themselves, they were consigning me over to the greatest distress imaginable.

Wretches! exclaimed Miss Woodby, I cannot think of them without detestation; but, my dear, pursued she, did not you wonder to see a person of any figure in a stage-coach? As for you, I soon discovered there was something extraordinary in your case; but what did you think of me with such company, and in such an equipage?

Indeed, my dear, said Miss Courtepy,



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ney, 'at that time a stage-coach appeared to me a most desirable vehicle, and I had not then the least notion of it's being a mean one; so greatly do our opinions of things alter with our circumstances and situations: besides, a difficulty then occurred to my thoughts, which, amidst the hurry and precipitation with which I quitted my aunt's house, had not been sufficiently attended to before, and that was how I should dispose of myself for a few days, till Mr. Damer's return; for it was necessary I should conceal myself with great care, having so much to apprehend from my aunt's bigotry and prejudices, and the (perhaps) interested officiousness of her chaplain.

'Under what strange disadvantages had I lodgings to seek for! by an assumed name, with an immediate occasion for them; and no recommendation to any particular house, which I could be sure was a reputable one. Your politeness, and the unexpected offer of your friendship, encouraged me to communicate my distress to you, and to intreat your assistance; and I must still regret the unlucky mistake that brought me hither instead of Mrs. Egret's. And now, my dear, you have my whole story before you. Have I not been very unfortunate? and am I not in a most dreadful situation? But what it chiefly concerns me to know, does your judgment acquit me of imprudence and folly in this precipitate flight from my aunt, to whom I owed so many benefits, and on whom I depended for support?

'Approve your flight!' cried Miss Woodby; 'Yes, certainly, child: who would not fly from a bigot, a priest, and an old hideous lover? I protest I would in your case have done the same thing.—' Well, that is some comfort,' replied Miss Courteney; 'but every body will not think as you do; and to a mind of any delicacy, sure nothing is so shocking as to have a reputation to defend; and the step I have taken will no doubt expose me to many unfavourable censures.'

'And do you imagine,' said Miss Woodby, 'that with a form so pleasing, and an understanding so distinguished, you will be exempted from the tax that envy is sure to levy upon merit?

'Don't you know what the most sensible of all poets says—

'Envy will merit as it's shade pursue,
'And like a shadow proves the substance true.

'Take my word for it, it is no great compliment we pay to persons, when we tell them that all the world speaks well of them; for those who are remarkable for any shining qualities will be more envied than admired, and frequently more calumniated than praised. But, child,' pursued the volatile Miss Woodby, assuming a sprightly air, 'how do you intend to dispose of yourself to-day? It is late; I must go home to dress.'

'Dispose of myself!' repeated Miss Courteney, 'even in this solitary chamber; for I am determined, since I must stay here a day or two longer, to be as little with my landlady as possible.'

Miss Woodby then fluttered down stairs, followed by her fair friend, who took that opportunity to tell Mrs. Eccles, that she should not leave her so suddenly as she had imagined; which was very agreeable news to the milliner, who had no other objection to her beautiful lodger, but her extreme reserve, which did not at all suit her purposes.

CHAP. VIII.

CONTAINING NOTHING EITHER
NEW OR EXTRAORDINARY.

MISS Courteney, after having traversed her chamber several times in great restlessness of mind, at length resolved to take a hackney-coach and drive to Mr. Damer's, supposing she should know from his clerks or servants the exact time when he was expected home; at least they could give her a direction where to write to him, and it would be some comfort to acquaint him with her situation, and have his advice.

She had no sooner formed this design, than she hastened to put it in execution; and having made a slight alteration in her dress, she went down to Mrs. Eccles, and desired her to send her maid for a coach, telling her she was obliged to go into the city upon business, and desired her not to wait for her at dinner. Mrs. Eccles insisted upon waiting till four o'clock

o'clock at least, and attended her to the door, less out of complaisance than to hear where she ordered the coachman to drive; for the inquietude, irresolution, and pensiveness, which she discovered in her fair lodger, extremely heightened her curiosity to know her affairs.

Henrietta, though she did not suspect the motive of her officiousness, yet not thinking it proper to let her know where she was going, only bid the coachman drive to St. Paul's Church-yard; and, when there, she gave him a fuller direction. 'Alas!' sighed she, when the coach stopped before the great gates of her guardian's house, 'were the hospitable master of this mansion at home, here should I find a secure asylum.'

As soon as a servant appeared, she asked if Mr. Damer was at home, that she might with greater propriety introduce her farther enquiries; but was most agreeably surprised to hear him answer her in the affirmative, while he opened the coach-door: however, she ordered the coachman to wait, and then followed the servant, who introduced her into a large parlour, and retired to acquaint his master with her being there.

Immediately a young gentleman, of an engaging appearance, entered the room, and desired to know her commands. Henrietta seeing, instead of her guardian, a young man whom she was quite a stranger to, blushed at first, but a more painful sense of her disappointment soon spread a paleness over her fair face.

'Is not Mr. Damer at home, Sir?' said she, in an accent that shewed her concern; 'my business was with him.'

'My father, Madam,' said the young gentleman, 'is in Holland, from whence I came myself but lately; he has affairs to settle there which will detain him three or four weeks. But cannot I serve you, Madam?' added he, his voice, unperceived by himself, becoming softer while he gazed on a form which it was not possible to behold without some sensibility. 'Pray let me know, it will give me great pleasure if I can be in the least degree useful to you.'

'I shall be obliged to you, Sir,' replied Miss Courteney, 'if you will forward a letter from me to Mr. Damer. It is a great unhappiness to me that he is abroad at this time: he is my guardian, and at present I have need of his advice and assistance.'

'Pardon me, Madam,' said young Mr. Damer, 'is not your name Courteney?'—'It is, Sir,' replied she.

'Dear Miss,' said he, looking on her with a tender sympathy, 'I wish my father was at home, since you wish so. And yet, perhaps—all parents are alike,' added he, after a pause and sighing; 'they are too apt to imagine that happiness consists in riches. But are you in a place of safety, Miss? Are you sure you are in no danger of being discovered? I wish it was in my power to offer you an asylum; but—'

'Bless me, Sir!' interrupted Henrietta, in great astonishment, 'you seem to be perfectly well acquainted with my situation.'

'Yes, Madam,' said Mr. Damer, 'I know something of your affairs, and from my soul I approve of your courage and resolution. A gentleman, named Danvers, was here yesterday to enquire for you; your aunt's chaplain, is he not?'

'Yes, Sir,' replied Miss Courteney, 'and my persecutor—but what did he say? I suppose he represented me in strange colours.'

'You need only to be seen, Madam,' said Mr. Damer, 'to undeceive the most prejudiced: yet what he said was not disadvantageous to you, unless,' added he, with a soft smile, 'you think it a fault to have a tender heart.'

'Ah! the wretch,' interrupted Miss Courteney, not able to contain her indignation; 'I see he has been propagating falsehoods injurious to my reputation; after having poisoned the mind of my aunt with suspicions that were the cause of my losing her affection, he is endeavouring to deprive me of every friend I have in the world. But this, Sir, is the plain truth: he suggested, as I have no reason to doubt, a preposterous match for me to my aunt; I rejected it; he found means to persuade my aunt, that I listened privately to the addresses of some man who was an improper husband for me. My aunt, in order to prevent my ruin, as she supposed, insisted upon my accepting the person she had chosen for me; and, upon my obstinate refusal, was prevailed upon by her chaplain to resolve to confine me in a nunnery abroad. I had intelligence of this design, and I secretly left my aunt's house, to prevent her executing it; but I am

'I am so far from having any secret engagement, that if I could be sure my aunt would not pursue her scheme of entrapping me in a convent, I would instantly return and bind myself by the most solemn oaths never to marry any one whom she does not approve.'

'You see, Sir,' proceeded Miss Courteney, 'what need I have of your father's assistance; he is my only friend and protector; through his mediation I might expect to be restored to the good opinion of my aunt.'

'Well, Madam,' said Mr. Damer, 'if you will write to him, I will take care of your letter; and, if it be ready to-morrow, I will attend you myself for it; I hope you have no objection to my knowing where you are: in my father's absence I shall be proud to act as your guardian; though he has had the happiness of knowing you longer, yet his concern for your interest cannot be greater than mine. Shall I wait on you to-morrow morning, Miss?' added he. Henrietta, by his manner of urging this request, and his frequently casting his eye towards the door, as if afraid of some interruption, concluding that she detained him from business of more importance, rose up immediately; and, giving him a direction to her lodgings by the name of Benson, told him, she would have her letter ready; but asked if it would not come safe inclosed to him by the penny post, being unwilling, she said, to give him the trouble of coming for it.

'I beg, Madam,' said he, as he took her hand to lead her to the coach, 'that you will believe I can have no greater pleasure than that of serving you. It is necessary that I should have an opportunity of talking to you at leisure, that I may know how I can be farther useful to you.'

Having helped her into the coach, he bowed low, and retired hastily, with such an expression of tender concern on his countenance as any woman, less free from vanity than Miss Courteney, would not have failed to observe; but she making no other reflections on his behaviour, than that he was more polite than persons usually are who are bred up to business, congratulated herself on having found a friend, through whom she could securely correspond with her guardian, and receive his advice, so that

she might now consider herself as being under his immediate care and direction, though absent; a circumstance that greatly alleviated her uneasiness.

Mrs. Eccles, who had waited dinner for her longer than had been agreed on, expressed great pleasure at seeing her look so chearful. 'To be sure,' said she, 'you have heard some unexpected good news; I am heartily glad of it. Well, now I hope you will have more spirits.' Henrietta smiled, but made no answer; for an ingenuous mind can only evade indiscreet curiosity by silence.

The cloth was scarce removed, when the young lord, who had now taken possession of his apartment in Mrs. Eccles's house, came into the parlour. Henrietta immediately rose up to retire to her own chamber, when he starting back, and standing at the door as if to obstruct her passage—'I came,' said he, 'Mrs. Eccles, to beg you would make me a dish of coffee; but since my presence drives this young lady away, I will go up stairs again.'

'Oh, by no means, my lord,' said Mrs. Eccles; 'I am sure Miss Benson will not let you think so.—You are not going, Miss, are you?' added she, turning to Henrietta.

'I have letters to write,' said the young lady, 'that will take me up the whole afternoon.'

'Well,' said my lord, 'I will drink no coffee then; for unless you stay, Miss, I shall be persuaded that my coming has driven you away. Let me intreat you,' pursued he, entering and leading her to a chair, 'to allow me the pleasure of drinking a dish of coffee with you; you will have time enough afterwards to write your letters.'

Miss Courteney, who was willing to avoid the appearance of singularity, sat down again, though with some reluctance, telling his lordship, that she would not be the means of disappointing him of his coffee; but that she must insist upon being permitted to withdraw in half an hour, having business of consequence upon her hands.

The young nobleman gave little attention to what she said, but gazed on her with an earnestness that threw her into some confusion. The milliner going out of the room to give orders about the coffee, he began in most vehement language

language to declare a passion for her, and called in the assistance of poetry, to express his admiration of her charms.

Henrietta, who in her own character would have treated this manner of address with ridicule and contempt, thought it became her, in her present circumstances, to resent it seriously; therefore rising, with some signs of indignation, she told him, that since his lordship thought proper to entertain her with such kind of discourse, she would immediately retire. My lord, who saw she was angry in good earnest, was excessively afraid of her leaving him; therefore taking her hand, which he forcibly held, till he had sealed a vow upon it with his lips that he would not say another word to offend her, he brought her back to her seat, which, upon seeing Mrs. Eccles enter, she resumed.

The conversation then took another turn; but Henrietta was too much chagrined to mix in it with any degree of cheerfulness: besides, the party seemed to her to be but ill assorted, a nobleman, a milliner, and a young woman in obscure circumstances. Her delicacy was shocked, and all the politeness she was mistress of was scarce sufficient to hinder her from shewing how much she was displeased with herself and her company.

As soon as the tea-equipage was removed, she looked at her watch; and seeming apprehensive that she should not have time enough to write her letters, she withdrew with such precipitation, that they had no opportunity to solicit her longer stay.

'This is a strange girl,' said the young lord, throwing himself into his chair, from whence he had risen to return the hasty compliment she made at her departure, 'but divinely handsome! Who can she be? I vow to Gad I believe I shall be in love with her in earnest. Have you made no discovery yet, Mrs. Eccles?' pursued he. 'There is certainly some mystery in the case, and a love mystery it must be; for women are not even faithful to their own secrets, unless an amour is the business, and then they are impentridable.'

'Your lordship may be sure,' said Mrs. Eccles, 'that I have spared no pains to discover who she is; but she is excessively reserved, and talks so little, that there is no probability of

entrapping her: yet I think there is one way by which your curiosity may be satisfied. Your lordship has seen a gay flighty lady with her, of whom she is very fond.'

'What, that ugly creature!' said my lord, 'that fastened upon me in your shop; do you mean her? Is Miss Benson fond of that thing?'—'Oh! very fond,' replied Mrs. Eccles; 'they were shut up together four hours this very morning.'

'Then depend upon it she is the confidant,' said his lordship. 'Oh! I guess your scheme; you would have me bribe her?'

'Bribe her, my lord!' repeated Mrs. Eccles; 'she seems to be a woman of some fashion. I dare say you would affront her extremely by offering her a bribe.'

'I am very sore,' interrupted his lordship, 'that she will not be able to resist the bribe I shall offer her: I will flatter her, my dear Mrs. Eccles, till I not only become master of all her friend's secrets, but even her own; but how shall I get an opportunity of talking to her alone?'

'I will engage,' said Mrs. Eccles, 'that it will not be long before she is here again; and if your lordship should happen to be below when she comes, I fancy you would not find it difficult to detain her a little while from her friend.'

'Well,' said my lord, 'I leave it to you to manage this interview for me: when I know who this Miss Benson is, I can make my approaches accordingly; but when do you expect her down stairs again?'—'Not till supper-time,' said Mrs. Eccles; 'she is never weary of being alone.'—'Ah! that is a bad sign,' said he; 'I doubt I have a rival. Well, I will look in upon you at ten o'clock; perhaps I may find her with you.'

Mrs. Eccles assuring him she would engage her till that time, if possible, he went away humming an opera air, but with less vacuity of thought than usual, Miss Benson being so much in his head, that, if he had been accustomed to reflection, he would have concluded she was in his heart also, and that he was in love with her in earnest.

Henrietta in the mean time was employed in writing her letter to Mr. Damer,

Damer, to whom she gave a faithful account of all that had happened to her, and earnestly intreated his good offices towards effecting a reconciliation between her aunt and her. The inconveniencies she saw herself exposed to in her present situation made her so desirous of this happy event, that her letter was almost a continued repetition of solicitations for that purpose. She begged him, in case he did not return to England, to write to her aunt, and endeavour to soften her, assuring him that she pretended to no greater liberty than what an obedient daughter might expect from a parent; being resolved to obey her will in every thing, provided she might not be compelled to marry the old baronet, nor confined in a nunnery with a view to the change of her religion.

She expressed her satisfaction in the polite behaviour of his son to her, whom she would consider, she said, as her guardian in his absence, and would take no step without his advice and concurrence.

She had finished her letter long before the milliner's usual hour of supper; but being resolved to go down no more that evening, she spread letters and papers upon the table, as if she still continued extremely busy. Mrs. Eccles, upon entering her chamber to know if she was ready for supper, found her with the pen still in her hand; and was a good deal mortified to hear her say, that, having dined so late, she would not sup that night, but would finish her letters before she went to bed.

Mrs. Eccles did not think proper to press her; for her extreme reserve inspired her with a kind of awe, that made her cautious of giving her the least disgust; and Henrietta taking leave of her at her chamber-door for the night, she went away in great concern for the disappointment his lordship would meet with.

It was indeed a very mortifying disappointment to him, for his impatience to see Miss Courteney had brought him back much sooner than he had intended; and Mrs. Eccles, when she came down stairs, found him already in her parlour. When he heard the young lady's resolution, not to appear again that night, he took an unceremonious leave of his complaisant landlady, and joined his company again at White's, wondering to find himself in so ill an humour, on so slight an occasion, and that dice

and Burgundy were scarce sufficient to call off his thoughts from this coy unknown, whom yet he did not despair of gaining.

CHAP. VI.

A VERY SHORT CHAPTER.

HENRIETTA, upon her coming down next morning to breakfast, was informed by Mrs. Eccles, that a gentleman had been enquiring for her that morning; but hearing she was not up, had left word that he would call again. She did not doubt but it was Mr. Damer, and was a little confused that his punctuality should so much exceed hers in an affair that immediately concerned her; but the truth was, the young merchant's impatience to see her had outstripped time, and he came much earlier than she had reason to expect him.

She retired immediately after breakfast, desiring that the gentleman might be shewn up stairs when he came again; for Mrs. Eccles, at her request, had made a small alteration in her apartment, and put her bed in an adjoining closet, that she might with more propriety receive a visit in her own room.

She was scarce got up stairs, when Mr. Damer was introduced: she apologized for the trouble he had in calling twice; and delivering him her letter, recommended it to his care with extreme earnestness, assuring him, she should be very unhappy till she had an answer. She then enquired more particularly concerning the visit Mr. Danvers had made him, anxious to collect from what he said what impression her flight had made upon her aunt.

'I will not flatter you Miss,' said Mr. Damer. 'Lady Meadows is extremely enraged. Mr. Danvers mentioned nothing of a design to put you into a convent; but owned that your aunt had a very advantageous match in view for you, which you rejected; and——'

'Pray go on, Sir,' said Henrietta, observing that he hesitated.

'Your aunt will have it, Madam,' pursued he, 'that your affections are engaged. I cannot believe that a young lady of your good sense would make an improper choice. I should

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'be very glad to be able to convince my father that nothing of this kind is the case. Excuse me, Miss, I am anxious for your happiness; it would give me infinite joy to find that your aunt is mistaken.'

'My aunt has no reason, Sir, for her suspicions,' replied Henrietta; 'but if my affections were engaged, why should she think I had made an improper choice?'—'Ah! Miss——' eagerly interrupted Mr. Damer.

'I hope, Sir,' said Miss Courteney, gravely, 'you will believe me, when I declare that my aunt's fears are without foundation; it concerns me greatly that your father should not entertain the same idle suspicions; and, were he here, I am sure I could convince him.'

'Dear Miss,' interrupted Mr. Damer, 'I cannot suffer you to go on; do not imagine that I am not convinced. I had doubts, but you will excuse them; my great concern for your happiness was the cause. Rely upon me, I beg you; I will take care my father shall not be prejudiced, and till his return I am your guardian.'

Henrietta, upon a little reflection, was more pleased than offended at the doubts he so candidly acknowledged; in so young a man, such plainness and sincerity were far more agreeable than the refinements of compliment and flattery, and more suitable to the character in which he desired to be considered, and in which she did consider him. She thanked him for a solicitude, which she said was so advantageous to her; and, to shew him that she wished to give him all imaginable satisfaction with regard to her conduct, she entered into a particular detail of the situation she had been in with her aunt, whose views, with regard to her, she explained: she slightly touched upon the character of the chaplain, and imputed to his great influence over her aunt the rash and severe resolutions she had taken against her.

She was proceeding to justify herself for having left her aunt's house, when Mr. Damer interrupted her with some emotion: 'Every reasonable person, Miss,' said he, 'that knows your motives for taking this step, will not only hold you excused, but will even applaud you for not sacrificing yourself to riches.'

'I am sure,' said Henrietta, 'my

aunt would hear reason, were it not for that invidious chaplain, who fills her with suspicions, and animates her resentment. Oh, that Mr. Damer was come!'

'I hope,' said the young merchant, 'that we shall see him shortly; but in the mean time, Miss, let me know how I can be useful to you: Do you like your present lodgings? Are the people such as you approve? Let me know if you have any inclination to remove, and I will endeavour to settle you somewhere that will be agreeable to my father. I suppose you would have no objection to lodge with an acquaintance of his, and where you will be near him.'

'No, certainly,' said Miss Courteney, 'it would be highly agreeable to me.'—'Well, Miss,' said Mr. Damer, rising, 'I will wait on you again in a day or two. But perhaps you have occasion for money; I have brought some with me; pray do not put yourself to any inconveniency, but draw for what sums you have occasion.'

'The trifle, Sir,' said Henrietta, blushing, 'that is in your father's hands, will not admit of my drawing very largely: however, I will venture to take up twenty pounds, because I have occasion to purchase some trifling things; for all my cloaths are at my aunt's, and I am in great hopes she will not send them after me: that would look indeed,' said she, sighing, 'as if I must never expect to return again; and I am resolved not to send for them, that it may appear I do expect and wish it.'

Mr. Damer, upon hearing this, pressed her to take forty guineas; but she said, twenty would do, having some money by her. He then took leave of her, with a promise to see her again soon; and left her greatly pleased with his friendly behaviour, and with the prospect of being soon with persons less obnoxious to her than Mrs. Eccles.

She had scarcely deposited her money in her desk, when Miss Woodby bolted into the room with her usual robust liveliness. Indeed her spirits were particularly exhilarated that day, having had the dear delight of conversing a whole hour with a beau, who said the civilest things to her imaginable; a piece of good fortune she did not often meet with, and for which, though her vanity did not suffer

suffer her to find it out, she was wholly indebted to her fair friend, the beau being no other than the young lord who lodged in the house, with whom she had been engaged in conversation great part of the time that Mr. Damer was with Miss Courteney. And if the reader is curious to know what passed between them, he will be fully informed in the next chapter.

CHAP. X.

WHICH GIVES THE READER A SPECIMEN OF FEMALE FRIENDSHIP.

MR. Damer had been about half an hour with Miss Courteney, when Miss Woodby came to pay her a morning visit. As soon as Mrs. Eccles saw a chair set her down at the door, she flew up stairs to acquaint her noble lodger with her arrival; he instantly followed her down, and meeting Miss Woodby at the bottom of the stairs, affected a joyful surprize at his good fortune in seeing her so unexpectedly again.

'The lady you are going to visit,' said he, 'is engaged with company, I believe; but I am resolved you shall not go away,' pursued he, taking her hand, and leading her into the parlour. 'I was so charmed with your conversation the first time I saw you, that it is not probable I will lose this opportunity of renewing our acquaintance.'

'Oh! your lordship is very obliging,' said Miss Woodby, suffering herself to be led into the parlour; while her transport at finding herself treated with so much gallantry, and her passionate desire of pleasing, threw her into such ridiculous affectation, that every limb and feature were distorted. Compliment, to which she was very little used, acting like strong liquors upon a weak head, she became so intoxicated, that she hardly knew what she did, which, joined to a natural awkwardness, produced the most absurd blunders in her behaviour; so that, endeavouring to trip with a lively motion to her seat, she overturned a light mahogany table that was in her way, and heard the crash of the china that was on it with very little emotion; the pleasure of shewing herself to the greatest advantage, absolutely engrossing her; and so unseasonably did she return his lordship's polite bow, when he had

seated her in her chair, that their foreheads struck against each other with a force like the concussion of two rocks; but this accident, no more than the former, disturbed Miss Woodby's enjoyment of her present happiness; and, wholly insensible to the pain of her forehead, she immediately entered into conversation with his lordship, asking him, with the liveliest air imaginable, if he had been at Ranelagh last night; never once making the least reflection upon what he had told her of her friend's being engaged with company, which, as she knew her situation, might well have raised her curiosity.

The beau told her, he was not there; 'but you and Miss Benson were, I suppose,' added he.

'Now your lordship mentions Miss Benson,' said she, without answering his question, 'pray tell me how you like her; is she not very handsome?'

'Yes,' replied my lord, 'she is handsome; but,' added he, looking full at her, 'she wants a certain lady's agreeable vivacity.'

'Oh, your servant, my lord,' said Miss Woodby, making the application immediately; 'but really, as your lordship observes, she wants vivacity; there is something heavy and lumpish in her.'

'Yet she is genteel,' said my lord. 'Oh! extremely genteel,' cried Miss Woodby; 'but does not your lordship think she is rather too tall? being so slender as she is, does not that height give her a certain awkwardness?—But I really think she has one of the finest complexions in the world!'

'Has she not rather too much bloom,' said my lord. 'Why, yes,' replied Miss Woodby; 'I think her complexion wants delicacy; but no objection can be made to her eyes, you must own, except that they are rather too large, and roll about heavily.'

'Upon the whole,' said my lord, 'Miss Benson is tolerable; but I perceive you are extremely fond of her by your partiality.'

'Oh, my lord,' said Miss Woodby, 'we are the greatest friends in the world; I conceived a violent friendship for her the first moment I saw her. You cannot imagine how ardent my friendships are!'

'That is bad news for your lover,' said my lord; 'for love and friendship,

‘the wife say, exclude each other; but I hope Miss Benson makes a proper return to so much affection.’

‘Oh! we are united in the strongest bands of friendship,’ said Miss Woodby; ‘the dear creature has not a thought that she conceals from me: and though I have not been acquainted with her a week, she has intrusted me with all her affairs.’

‘Indeed!’ said my lord, ‘not acquainted a week, and so communicative! Are you sure, my dear Miss Woodby, that this young lady is not a little silly?’

‘I cannot say,’ replied Miss Woodby, ‘that her understanding is the best in the world; but she has a very good heart.’

‘Your own is very good, I do not doubt,’ said my lord, ‘which leads you to make so favourable a judgment of another’s. However, as she has laid open her affairs to you, you may, from the conduct she has avowed, collect your opinion of her.’

‘Very true,’ said Miss Woodby; ‘and I do assure your lordship, that I cannot help approving of her conduct, because her motives were certainly just: though the ill-judging world may perhaps condemn her for running away from her aunt; and, from her hiding herself in a lodging, assuming another name, and such little circumstances, may take occasion to censure her; yet I am persuaded in my own mind that she is blameless.’

‘Benson is not her name then?’ said my lord, affecting great indifference. ‘Oh, no, my lord,’ said Miss Woodby, ‘her name is Courteney. But bless me! what have I done! I hope, my lord, you will be secret; I did not intend to tell your lordship Miss Benson’s true name. I would not for the world violate that friendship I have vowed to her.’

‘Depend upon it, Madam,’ said my lord, ‘I will be secret as the grave. It is of no consequence to me to know her name; I shall never think of it again. But to be sure the poor girl is to be pitied. And so she ran away from her aunt; who is her aunt, pray?’

‘Her aunt’s name is Meadows,’ said Miss Woodby, ‘Lady Meadows; do you know her?’

‘Not I,’ said my lord, throwing himself into a careless posture, and hum-

ming an air, as if his attention was wholly disengaged; when suddenly turning again to Miss Woodby with a smile—

‘Why,’ said he, ‘should not you and I be as good friends as Miss Benson and you are? our acquaintance is not of a much shorter date, and perhaps commenced nearly in the same manner.’

‘I protest,’ said Miss Woodby, ‘and so it did; for I first saw your lordship in Mrs. Eccles’s shop, and I happened to meet Miss Benson in a stage-coach about four days ago.’

‘And there your acquaintance began?’ said my lord; ‘you have improved it well since, if she has really been ingenuous enough to let you into the true state of her affairs. I suppose there is a lover in the case.’

‘A lover there certainly is,’ said Miss Woodby; ‘but he was of her aunt’s chusing; and it is from this lover she fled.’

‘O brave girl!’ said my lord; ‘but is she not fled to a lover of her own chusing?’—‘No, I believe not,’ said Miss Woodby.

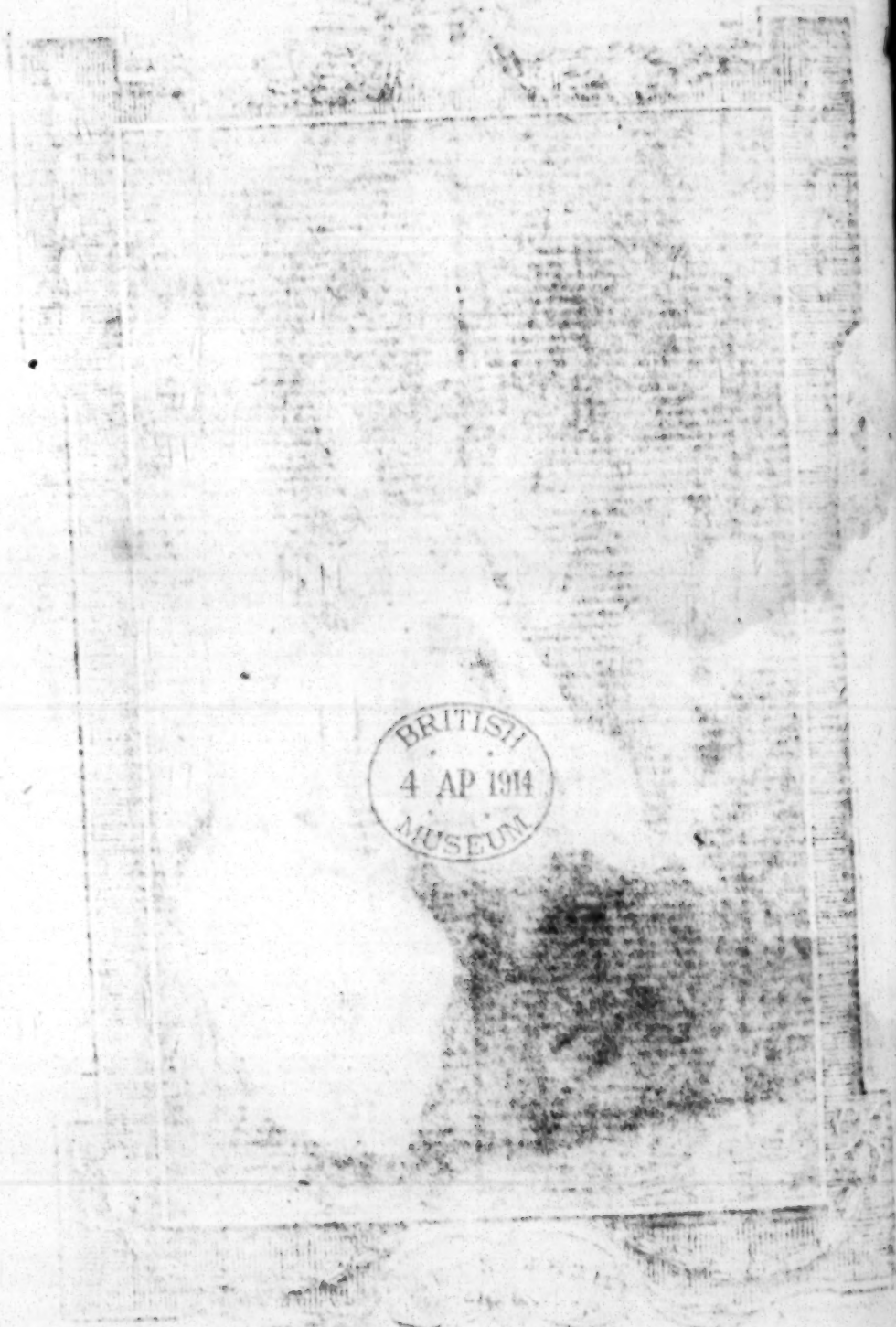
‘Well,’ said my lord, ‘I fancy she has deceived you, and that the gentleman who is with her now is her lover; he is a plain sort of man, Mrs. Eccles says, and looks like a merchant.’

‘Oh!’ said Miss Woodby, ‘it is Mr. Damer her guardian, I suppose.’—‘But this is a young man,’ said my lord. ‘Then perhaps it is her brother,’ said Miss Woodby, ‘who was abroad with a nobleman, and is now returned.’

‘I think I hear him coming down stairs,’ said my lord, ‘I have a mind to see him as he goes out.’ Saying this, he bowed and ran into the shop, leaving Miss Woodby a little confused at his abrupt departure: and now, for the first time, she reflected that she had been indiscreet, and revealed too much of her friend’s situation; but being incapable of taking any great interest in the concerns of another, this thought did not affect her much; her spirits had been put into such a violent flurry by my lord’s complaisant address to her, that she only considered her own satisfaction in holding him in conversation; and if he had come back to her again, she would have given him all the remaining part of Miss Courteney’s history, without reflecting upon the baseness of the



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the part she was acting, and only sensible to the pleasure of engaging the attention of a man: for, by the fatal concurrence of a disagreeable figure, and much affectation, she was generally neglected by that sex whom she took all imaginable pains to please.

His lordship, at his going out of the room, had no otherwise taken leave of her than by a running bow, which left her some faint hopes of his return; but seeing him put on his hat and go hastily out of the shop, she concluded that he did not intend to come back: therefore she went up stairs to pay a visit to her friend, to whose account of her meeting with young Mr. Damer, and his friendly behaviour to her, she gave so little attention, her thoughts being wholly engrossed by the agreeable young nobleman, that when she left her, which was but a very short time afterwards, she scarce remembered any thing that had passed between them.

CHAP. XI.

IN WHICH OUR HEROINE IS IN GREAT DISTRESS.

IN the mean time the young lord, having an extreme curiosity to see the man whom he suspected to be his rival, followed Mr. Damer down the street, and had a full view of him as he crossed into another. He found he was young, and had an agreeable air, but there was a kind of penitiveness on his countenance, that did not seem to suit with the condition of a favourite lover. He readily admitted this thought, because it favoured his own wishes; he reflected on what he had heard from the communicative Miss Woodby, and concluded he had no reason to despair.

A young woman eloped from her relations, with nobody about her of authority enough to controul or direct her actions; these were very favourable circumstances for a man of intrigue: and he resolved to be no longer kept at a distance by a reserve, which he imputed either to affectation or artifice, and which a suitable share of boldness could only overcome.

Having settled the plan of his operations with Mrs. Eccles, whom he had strongly engaged in his interests, he re-

tired to his own lodgings; for those he had at the milliner's were only hired to facilitate his designs upon Miss Courteney.

That young lady finding herself free from his intrusion, and being less disgusted with Mrs. Eccles's behaviour than usual, who was very much upon her guard, and had her reasons for being so, passed the day with more tranquillity of mind than her situation had hitherto permitted, and condescended, at Mrs. Eccles's intreaty, to spend two hours with her after supper at piquet.

In the mean time his lordship had conveyed himself into a closet in her apartment, and about eleven o'clock saw the unsuspecting fair one enter with a candle in her hand, and, after cautiously fastening the door, sit down composedly to read.

Her beauty, which was of that sort which inspires respect as well as love, the innocence of her deportment, her security amidst that danger which threatened her, excited sentiments that made him half ashamed of his design. Charmed with beholding her in so agreeable an attitude, her fair face reclined on one of her hands, her elbow leaning on the table, her book in the other hand, which she seemed intently to read, he opened the closet-door a little way, that he might have the pleasure of contemplating her at leisure.

This motion was not unobserved by Henrietta; she raised her eyes off her book, which made him hastily pull the door close again. Henrietta, now convinced that there was somebody in her closet, started up, and, dropping her book, cried out aloud for help. His lordship immediately rushed out of the closet, threw himself at her feet, and begged her not to be frightened. Indignation succeeded to terror; her face, which was all pale and wan before, was now crimsoned over; her eyes shot indignant flashes at the insolent invader; but, in a moment, recollecting the danger she was exposed to, again her face was overspread with paleness, and an universal trembling seized her. The young lord, who observed the beautiful emotion, and was beginning to be shocked at the boldness of his attempt, again conjured her not to be afraid, and vowed he would leave her room: but Henrietta, on whom these assurances made no impression,

pression, sprung from him to the window, and, throwing up the sash, cried out as loud as she was able.

‘Miss Courteney,’ said he rising, but keeping at a distance for fear of alarming her more, ‘do not indiscreetly expose yourself; I swear by Heaven I will leave your room.’

‘What!’ cried she, amazed to the last degree to hear him pronounce her name; ‘you know me then, and yet have dared to insult me thus! But leave me, my lord, this instant leave me, or I will raise the neighbourhood by my cries.’

‘Charming creature!’ said his lordship, looking on her with tenderness and awe, ‘I do know you, and I know your virtue now; I will leave you: believe me I am sorry for the terror I have put you into. Grant me a moment’s audience to-morrow; I have something to say to you that will convince you I am desirous of meriting your pardon.’

He then bowed respectfully, and, unlocking the door, went down stairs; Henrietta all the time keeping close to the window, that she might be ready to call for help, if he shewed any design of staying in her apartment: nor, till she heard him enter his own, and shut the door after him, durst she venture from her post to secure her door, which she did with the utmost precipitation, making it as fast as she could; and then shutting her window, for her cries had not been heard, she passed the night in a chair, resolving not to go to bed any more in that house.

The dangers she was exposed to, made her almost repent of having fled from her aunt’s tyranny; and mortified as she was by such shocking insults, she thought it would have been a less misfortune to be the wife of Sir Isaac Darby, or the inmate of a gloomy convent, than the avowed object of a libertine’s passion.

Surprised as she was that my lord was acquainted with her name, and anxious to know by what means he had made the discovery, yet it never once occurred to her that Miss Woodby had betrayed her. Her generous mind was incapable of suggesting such a suspicion, and she was even doubtful whether Mrs. Eccles was privy to his insolent attempt: so difficult it is for innocence to fathom the depths of guilt.

Amidst the melancholy reflections which her situation gave rise to, she drew

some consolation from Mr. Damer’s friendly concern for her. She resolved to go to him in the morning, and claim his promise of settling her immediately with one of his father’s friends, yet without revealing the mortifying treatment she had been exposed to, and from which she had extricated herself: for true virtue blushes to own it’s conquests, because those conquests are proofs of it’s having been attempted. These various thoughts kept her waking the whole night; but towards morning she fell into a slumber, from whence she was roused by a loud knocking at her chamber-door. She rose instantly from her chair, where she had passed the night; and perceiving the day was far advanced, opened the door, and let in her landlady; who excused herself for disturbing her, being apprehensive, she said, that she was ill, from her continuing so long in her chamber.

‘It would not be surprising,’ said Henrietta coolly, ‘if I should be ill, considering the fright I was in last night. Did you not hear me cry out, Mrs. Eccles?’

‘Dear heart,’ said Mrs. Eccles, smiling, ‘hear you cry out! why, what was the matter? some groundless apprehensions of thieves, I suppose; but there is no danger; my house has very good fastenings; I have lain in it many a night by myself, I assure you.’

‘That may be,’ said Miss Courteney; ‘but I am resolved never to lie in it another night: it would be well, Mrs. Eccles, if you were a little more cautious to whom you let your lodgings; rakes are dangerous company.’

‘I hope I have no such persons in my house,’ said Mrs. Eccles. ‘I have been insulted in your house,’ said Henrietta, ‘which obliges me to hasten my departure from it. Pray let your maid get me a coach to the door.’

‘Why, you are not going, Madam, are you?’ said Mrs. Eccles, pertly. ‘Not immediately,’ replied Miss Courteney, ‘but I shall go to-day; at present I am going out upon business.’

‘And why, pray, will you go to-day, Madam?’ said Mrs. Eccles still more saucily. ‘Because,’ said Miss Courteney, who did not like the accent in which she spoke, ‘I do not chuse to stay in a house where I am liable to be insulted.’

‘I hope you intend to cast no aspersions upon my character, Madam,’ said

said Mrs. Eccles: 'I would have you to know that I value my character as much as any body, though I am not so prudish as some folks.'

'Will you order your maid to get me a coach?' said Henrietta, who was extremely apprehensive of some farther rudeness from this woman; 'I am in haste.'

'Insulted, indeed!' repeated Mrs. Eccles: 'fine airs for folks to give themselves, when nobody knows who they are, or what they are.' Henrietta finding that her insolence increased, told her she would go down herself, and send the maid for a coach, and was passing by her for that purpose; but Mrs. Eccles placed herself between her and the door: 'No, no, my fine scrupulous young lady,' says she, 'you shall not stir, I assure you.'

'Sure,' said Miss Courteney, trembling, yet endeavouring to seem very courageous, 'you will not dare to detain me!'—'Indeed but I will,' said Mrs. Eccles, 'till I am paid; I know nothing of you but your airs and affectation; I may never see you again, perhaps.'

The young lady immediately pulled out her purse, blushing at the new indignity that was offered her; and taking out a guinea, 'I agreed with you, Mrs. Eccles,' said she, 'for a guinea a week: here is a guinea for you, and now am I at liberty to go out?'

'Perhaps not,' said Mrs. Eccles; 'you have aspersed me with scandalous reflections, and I can tell you, Madam, I will have satisfaction.'—'Lord bless me!' said Miss Courteney, who was now frightened out of her seeming courage, 'what shall I do! what will become of me?'

This exclamation immediately brought up his lordship, who had been listening at the door of his apartment, and heard part of what had passed.

As soon as Henrietta saw him her terror increased, not doubting but he came as an auxiliary to her landlady; but the contemptuous look he gave Mrs. Eccles, removed her apprehensions.

'What do you mean,' said he, in an angry tone, 'by treating this young lady in such a manner?—Miss Benson, do not be uneasy: if you are going, you shall meet with no hindrance; I ask your pardon for being the cause of your fright last night; I do assure you I am sincerely sorry for it.'

'I hope you are, my lord,' said Miss Courteney, 'and I thank you for this reasonable interposition.' Saying this, she hastened down stairs, and dispatched the maid for a coach; while she stepped into the milliner's parlour to settle her dress a little, and to put on her hat and cardinal, which she had brought down in her hand.

CHAP. XII.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY GOES FORWARD.

HENRIETTA was waiting impatiently for the coach, when the young nobleman entered the room. 'You are going, then, Miss?' said he, sighing. 'I waited at home all this morning for an opportunity of seeing you, that I might recommend such a resolution as I find your prudence has suggested to you. Mrs. Eccles is not a proper woman for you to lodge with, and this I believe her behaviour to-day has convinced you of; had she not made the discovery to you herself, I should have done it, partly to repair the affront I have been so unhappy to offer you, and partly to secure you against the like, by letting you know that you are in the house of a woman of doubtful character.'

This language bore the marks of so much prudence and sincerity, that Henrietta could not help being affected with it; and accordingly she expressed a grateful sense of his concern for her.

'I have something else to say to you,' said he, 'which possibly will surprise you more; but it is necessary you should know it, to avoid farther inconveniences, by a misplaced confidence: it was your friend Miss Woodby that informed me of your true name and circumstances. I see you are shocked; she has indeed betrayed you, but less from malice, I believe, than folly. I am master of your secret, Miss Courteney,' said he, speaking lower, and taking her hand; 'but you may depend upon it, I shall make no other use of it, but to serve you in whatever way you shall direct. Command my utmost services; dearest creature, dispose of me, my life, and fortune: never did I feel a real passion for any of your sex before.'

'My

'My lord,' interrupted Miss Courteney, concerned to find him again upon this strain, which destroyed the hope of his disinterestedness; 'since you know my situation, you must also know that such discourse is extremely embarrassing to me. I am at present under the displeasure of my friends, without whose consent I will never admit of an address of this kind.' She looked at him here; and observing him in some confusion, for indeed his intentions were not of that sort that could be communicated to her friends, she blushed at the humiliating idea that apparent confusion raised in her mind; but recovering herself—

'I am contented,' said she, 'that your lordship should know my name, since chance has ordered it so, and I depend upon your honour not to mention me. I must also acknowledge myself obliged to you for the discovery you have made of Miss Woodby's treachery; it is a very useful discovery, for otherwise I should still have confided in her, and been again betrayed.' His lordship was going to reply with great eagerness, when the maid came in, and informed Miss Courteney, that a coach was at the door.

'You are going, then?' said he, with a melancholy look; but, ere he could proceed, Mrs. Eccles entered, and, with a countenance and voice altered to great obsequiousness, told Henrietta, that the gentleman who had been there yesterday enquired for her. 'O how lucky is this!' exclaimed Miss Courteney: 'let him be shewn up stairs, I'll wait on him.' The milliner having withdrawn, the young lord caught hold of Henrietta's hand as she was leaving the room—

'And can you be so cruel,' said he, 'to quit me thus without giving me the least hope?'—'Pray, my lord,' said Miss Courteney, drawing her hand from him with an air disdainful enough, 'no more of this idle gallantry.'

'Who is this gentleman that enquires for you?' said he, with a beseeching air.

'My lord,' replied Miss Courteney, 'the gentleman is my friend.'—'Say rather your lover,' said he: 'Oh! what joy you discovered when you heard he was come!'—'I had reason for being rejoiced,' interrupted she; 'he is my guardian, who has the care

of my affairs.'—'Your guardian,' repeated his lordship, 'may I not know his name?'

'He is the guardian of my person rather than my fortune,' said Henrietta; 'the poor trifle that I can call my own, does not deserve the name of fortune. It is my unhappiness,' added she, sighing, 'to be in a situation that exposes me to unworthy suspicions, and subjects me to humiliating explanations. You know my name, my lord, therefore you may know the name of the person under whose protection I shall be for the future; Mr. Damer is my guardian, he is a considerable merchant in the city.'

'Enough,' cried the lover, kissing her hand in a rapture, while she was struggling to be gone from him, 'I know him. Say only,' pursued he, still endeavouring to detain her, 'that you will permit me to see you again.'—'Excuse me, my lord,' said Henrietta, breaking from him, 'I cannot grant your request; though I must repeat the one I made to you, Take no notice of your having met with me, and suffer me to be obliged to you for your secrecy.'

'O! doubt me not,' said he, following her to the stairs, and taking a passionate leave of her with his eyes, 'I will obey you.'

Henrietta answered no otherwise than by a courtesy, and hastened up to Mr. Damer, wondering at this unexpected visit, and indulging a flattering hope that his father was returned.

Mr. Damer met her as she entered the room, and, bowing more gravely than usual, told her, that he was afraid he kept her at home, being informed by her landlady that she was just going out.

'I was going out,' said Miss Courteney, 'but it was to you.'—'Were you?' replied he, with a smile of pleasure that beamed over his countenance; 'have you any new commands for me? I am glad I came so seasonably.'

'But tell me, Sir,' said Miss Courteney, 'is my worthy guardian come back? have you any news for me? This visit was unexpected.'

The young merchant was a little disconcerted at this question; for he had reasons which he did not care to own for visiting her so soon again: he had a glimpse of the young lord, as he passed by the parlour the day before; he saw him

him come out of the house; observed that he followed him, and looked at him with an inquisitive eye. He began to suspect that this gay gentleman had some design upon Miss Courteney, and that she might have an inclination for him. He therefore resolved to take her immediately out of his way, and had already secured to her a safe retreat.

'I wish,' said he, 'that I had any better news to bring you, than that I have provided you a lodging with the wife of one of my father's factors; she is a sensible woman, and will treat you with great respect. I am persuaded my father will be pleased to find you there.'—'And I am ready,' said Henrietta, eagerly, 'to go immediately; for my intended visit to you to-day was to press you to find some suitable lodging for me. I don't know the person with whom I am at present; and she has no woman-lodger in the house but myself.'

'You have a great deal of prudence,' Miss, said Mr. Damer, who was indeed excessively pleased to find her so desirous of going; 'I fancy you can soon settle with your landlady; and we will make use of that hackney coach which stands at the door, and which you sent for, it seems.'—'I have settled already with her,' said Miss Courteney; 'and this small parcel you see will be all my luggage, except the money you paid me yesterday,' added she, smiling, and unlocking her desk to take it out.

Mr. Damer very politely took up her little parcel, and carried it down stairs. Mean time Miss Courteney was so much mistress of her resentment as to take a civil leave of Mrs. Eccles; and Mr. Damer, who was waiting for her at the door, handed her into the coach, and came in himself, after he had given the man directions where to drive.

The young nobleman, who was standing at one of his windows, saw her depart with great uneasiness. She was now in the hands of her guardian, and consequently his approaches would be more difficult; but youth and fortune think every thing attainable. His passion for Henrietta was violent enough to make him run all hazards to obtain her on any terms but marriage. Nothing is more easy than for love to conquer reason; it's greatest triumph is when it is victorious over interest. The Earl of —, father

to this young lord, was negotiating a match for him with a young woman of very great fortune, the daughter of an eminent packer in the city. The noble youth, stimulated by forty thousand pounds, had pleaded his passion with such success, that the lady preferred him to all his titled rivals, and he had a great many, from the baronet up to the duke. The honest packer, sacrificing his ambition to his daughter's inclinations, chose rather to let her follow her taste, and be only a countess, than become father-in-law to a duke by crossing it: an admirable instance of humility it must be confessed; and scarce to be equalled but by that of the nobleman, who, with such generous contempt of hereditary honours, solicited his alliance; but, happily for the reformation of manners, such instances are not now very rare.

This marriage therefore being in great forwardness, it behoved the young lord to be cautious in prosecuting his scheme upon Miss Courteney. He was convinced she was virtuous; and that the only way to undermine that virtue was to make himself sure of her heart, before he discovered that his repentance was but feigned, and his intentions not honourable; when the passion she had for him would excuse, if not justify, an attempt that passion forced him to make; firmly depending on the poet's maxim, that *the faults of love by love are justified*.

The great point was to bring her to admit of his addresses without the knowledge of her friends, for which he could urge reasons sufficient; and when that point was gained, he might securely reckon upon success: for a young woman who engages in a private correspondence of that kind, deprives herself of the suggestions of prudence, the caution of experience, the counsels of wisdom, and the restraint of authority; her whole conduct is then influenced by the passion with which she is actuated, which is at once her impulse and her guide.

Our lover, having given some sighs to the departure of his mistress, comforted himself in the hope of seeing her soon, with more advantage, since he had in some degree secured her confidence by the disinterested advice he had given her with regard to Mrs. Eccles; and having now no farther occasion for the apartment he had hired in that house, he quitted it immediately, not without discovering in his behaviour to her at parting some part

of that contempt which even the greatest libertines feel for such as assist their criminal designs.

Mean time Henrietta, extremely pleased with the care and attention of her new guardian, was by him conducted to a large well-furnished house in the city, and received with great respect by the mistress of it, who was a middle-aged woman, with a benevolent aspect and an easy agreeable behaviour.

'Mrs. Willis,' said Mr. Damer, leading in Miss Courteney, 'permit me to introduce to you this young lady, my father's ward, and at present under my care: I hope you will make every thing agreeable to her during the time she stays with you.—Miss Benson,' added he, 'I need not give Mrs. Willis any other recommendation to you, than that she is a friend of my father's, and very much esteemed by him.'

Henrietta, though in some confusion at being introduced under a feigned name to a friend of Mr. Damer's, saluted her with a graceful air, and replied to the compliments she made her with great politeness; but took the first opportunity of her withdrawing, to ask Mr. Damer, why he concealed her true name from a friend of his father's?

Mr. Damer asked her pardon for not having consulted her before on that subject; but said, that by still continuing the name of Benson, she would be more secure from the search her aunt might make for her.

'Alas! Sir,' said Miss Courteney, 'I am afraid my aunt is too much offended to be at any pains to find me out. I am more apprehensive of the contrivances of Mr. Danvers; he, no doubt, has strong reasons for putting her upon such harsh measures. While I was alone and unprotected, I thought it necessary to conceal myself, since it was not impossible but I might have been forced away; but I am sure no such attempt will be made, when it is known that I am under my guardian's protection. I think therefore this gentlewoman ought to be acquainted with my name. I would avoid as much as possible the appearance of mystery. I shall never recollect, without pain, the sad necessity that has reduced me to it.'

'It will not be prudent,' said Mr. Damer, 'to alter our measures now. I have called you Miss Benson; the

covery of your true name will come with more propriety from my father, when he has accommodated matters between your aunt and you: we may expect a letter from him in a day or two, in which he will probably fix the time of his return. In the mean while, I hope you will find yourself agreeably situated here. I have agreed for your board and lodging.'

'At a moderate price, I hope,' said Miss Courteney; 'my circumstances do not entitle me to great expence.'—'I have taken care of that,' said Mr. Damer. Mrs. Willis coming in that moment, he recommended Miss Courteney to her care, promising, when he heard from his father, to come immediately with the news. He then took his leave, and Mrs. Willis conducted her fair lodger to another parlour, where the cloth was laid for dinner, and introduced two pretty children to her, a boy and a girl, with whom the young lady was extremely pleased.

There was in the countenance of this woman so much sweetness and complacency, and such an unaffected politeness in her behaviour, that Henrietta found herself insensibly disposed to like her, and was pleased to hear her fall naturally into an account of herself with a frankness and simplicity that denoted the goodness of her heart.

From what she said, Miss Courteney collected that she had made a marriage of choice rather than of prudence, and that industry had supplied the place of fortune. She found she was under great obligations to the elder Mr. Damer, who had settled her husband in an advantageous way at Leghorn, where he acted as his factor, and had enabled her to furnish that large house, in a very genteel manner, for the reception of such merchants as came from abroad, and were by him recommended to lodge with her. Her extreme tenderness for her husband, which had hurried her to Leghorn upon hearing that he was ill, that she might have the satisfaction of attending him herself, and her anxiety for her children, which brought her back as soon as he was recovered, that she might re-assume her care of them, were qualities which won her the esteem of Miss Courteney. She marked with what becoming reserve she slightly touched upon her family and connections, which were very genteel, and by which Henrietta accounted for the

the easy politeness of her manners and behaviour, so seldom found in persons of her rank.

The young lady then turned the discourse upon her guardian's son, whose character she was desirous of being acquainted with. Mrs. Willis told her, that he was a sober diligent young man, and though the heir of immense riches, yet applied himself to business with as much industry as if he had his fortune to make: that he had for several years transacted his father's business in Holland, from whence he was but lately returned; and that he traded largely for himself.

'Before I went to Leghorn,' added she, 'there was some talk of his being to be married to the daughter of a very rich citizen; but since my return, which was about a week ago, I have heard nothing of it, not having seen Mr. Damer till the day that he came to tell me I should be so happy as to have you, Madam, for my lodger.'

Miss Courteney having passed this day more agreeably than she had done any since she had left her aunt, was at night conducted by Mrs. Willis to a genteel apartment, consisting of a bed-chamber and dressing-room. She dismissed the maid whom Mrs. Willis ordered to attend and undress her; and being greatly fatigued for want of rest the preceding night, lost all her cares, her anxieties, and resentments, in the sweet oblivion of a calm and uninterrupted sleep.

CHAP. XIII.

THE HISTORY STILL ADVANCES.

HENRIETTA, though an early riser, and though she rose next morning earlier than usual, yet found, upon her going down, Mrs. Willis had waited breakfast for her some time.

As soon as the tea-equipage was removed, she retired to leave Mrs. Willis at liberty to go about her domestick affairs; and, when alone, was again assaulted with all those cruel reflections which had almost incessantly filled her mind since her flight from her aunt. Among these, Miss Woodby's treachery suggested none of the least painful: she was ashamed of her credulity, of her ill-placed confidence; indignation for the shocking treatment she had met with from her succeeded. She was upon the point

of sitting down to write to her, and to express the deepest resentment of her malice and treachery; when, recollecting the extreme levity of that young woman's temper, her ridiculous affectation, her folly and insensibility, she thought it would ill become her to make serious remonstrances to one who only merited contempt; that, by taking no farther notice of her, that contempt would be best expressed, and her own consciousness of the part she had acted would account for it.

While she was thus ruminating, Mrs. Willis's maid introduced two porters bringing in a large trunk to her apartment. They delivered her the key sealed up, and a letter from Mr. Damer, in which he informed her, he would wait on her that afternoon.

She opened the trunk trembling; it contained all her cloaths, linen, and all the trinkets her aunt had given her. She searched eagerly in it to see if there was a letter for her; but finding none, she threw herself into a chair, and burst into a flood of tears.

While her aunt retained her cloaths, she had formed a feeble hope that she was anxious for her return, and would facilitate it, by assuring Mr. Damer, that she would no more press her to the hated marriage, nor think of confining her in a convent; but now what could she conclude, but that she had abandoned her for ever, and that a reconciliation was not to be expected? The most gloomy prospects offered themselves to her view, poverty, dependence, neglect; but, what was worse than all, the loss, perhaps, of reputation. How should she be able to excuse herself to the world for her late action; the world which judges actions only by their success: and when it beheld her unhappy and reduced to indigence, would not fail to conclude her guilty?

In these melancholy apprehensions did she wear away the hours till summoned to dinner by Mrs. Willis, who, with tender concern, perceived that she was afflicted, but would not discover that she perceived it; and used her utmost endeavours to amuse her, yet without any apparent solicitude, lest it should alarm her sensibility with a fear that her uneasiness was observed.

Mr. Damer came, according to his promise, in the afternoon: his arrival gave almost as much satisfaction to Mrs.

Willis, as to her fair anxious lodger, from a hope that it would produce some comfort to her. The young merchant instantly discovered that Henrietta had been weeping; and, as soon as Mrs. Willis withdrew, he tenderly approached her, and taking her hand, asked her if any thing new had happened to give her disturbance? Henrietta replied with a hasty question, 'Have you any message for me from my aunt, Sir?'

'I cannot say I have a message for you, Miss,' answered Mr. Damer; 'your aunt has indeed wrote to me.'— 'May I not see her letter?' asked Miss Courteney again, eagerly. 'To be sure,' said he, taking it out of his pocket, and presenting it to her, 'I wish it was conceived in more favourable terms.' Miss Courteney read it trembling, and found it as follows:

'SIR,
'I have given directions that every thing which belongs to that unhappy girl my niece should be sent to you, that, if you know where she is, they may be conveyed to her. She has, by her scandalously running away from me, ruined her own character, and brought aspersions upon mine; since even those who condemn her most, will likewise blame me, as if I had acted unkindly towards her.
'May the loss of my affection be the least of her misfortunes; though the worst that can possibly happen are likely to be the punishment of her ingratitude and folly.'

Henrietta returned the letter to Mr. Damer with a sigh. 'I have indeed,' said she, 'irrecoverably lost her affection; but, Sir, it is fit my aunt should know where I am, and that I solicited your protection as soon as I could. This will preserve me from some of those unfavourable suspicions which she mentions so severely. I will write to her instantly.'

'Oh! no, by no means,' said Mr. Damer; 'I think it will be best for me to make a visit to Lady Meadows, and tell her, that you are under my care, and that I have placed you here.'

'And will you take the trouble to go to Windsor, Sir?' said Miss Courteney, extremely delighted with this expe-

dient. 'I would go any where,' said Mr. Damer, 'to serve you. Pray make yourself easy.'

'I shall be easier,' said Miss Courteney, 'when my aunt knows that this scandalous runaway is under proper protection, and is accountable for all her actions to your father. Perhaps she may relent when she is convinced I am not so indiscreet as she imagined, and that I had no other motive for leaving her but the fear of being confined in a convent. If you find my aunt absolutely resolved not to be reconciled to me, I must then consider how to dispose of myself in a way more suitable to my circumstances.'

'Remember, Miss,' said Mr. Damer, with some emotion, 'that you are under my care. I hope you will take no resolution without acquainting me.'— 'No, certainly,' replied Henrietta— 'but, Sir, I have no fortune; I am lodged, attended, and treated, as if I had a very considerable one. This expence I shall not be willing to support a great while longer; it will break in too much upon that trifling sum, which was put into your father's hands, for my brother's use as well as mine. Heaven knows,' said she, sighing, 'whether he is alive; if he is, he will probably need it; if he is not, it will go but a very little way in supporting me in the manner in which I now live.'

While Henrietta was speaking in this manner, Mr. Damer seemed ready to interrupt her several times, but checked himself as if upon better recollection. When she was silent, he walked about the room, musing; then suddenly turning towards her—

'These considerations, Madam,' said he, 'ought at least to be postponed till my father's return, and I think you may rely upon his prudence; he will certainly take care that your expences shall not exceed your income: in placing you here, I have done what I thought would be agreeable to him.'

Henrietta, observing that he was in some confusion, was concerned that she had spoke so freely, being apprehensive that he understood what she had said as a distrust of his prudence. She therefore told him, that if he found her aunt implacable, she would be extremely well satisfied to continue with Mrs. Willis

as long as Mr. Damer should think it necessary.

This assurance satisfied the young merchant, who left her with a promise to see Lady Meadows the next day, and to wait on her as soon as possible with an account of the success of his visit.

She passed this interval in a state of anxiety and suspense that doubled every hour. As soon as she saw Mr. Damer again, she endeavoured to read in his countenance, before he spoke, the news he had brought her.

'Well, Miss,' said he, 'I have seen your aunt.' He paused; and Henrietta, in a faltering accent, begged him to tell her, in one word, whether he had succeeded or not?

'Indeed I have not,' said he; 'Lady Meadows seems resolved never to forgive you for running away from her; but don't despair, my father may have more weight with her.'—'It is at least some comfort,' said she, 'that she knows I am under your protection.'—'I have a letter from my father,' said Mr. Damer; 'he has got the gout in his right hand; he dictated it to one of his clerks, and therefore speaks with reserve of you. He desires me to tell you, that he hopes to be in London in three weeks at farthest, when he will use his utmost endeavours to reconcile you to your aunt; and, in the mean time, recommends you most affectionately to my care.'

This account of her guardian's kind concern for her, gave some relief to the depressed spirits of Miss Courteney, who, although she had not flattered herself with any hope from the young merchant's mediation with her aunt, was as much shocked at the confirmation of her continued displeasure, as if she had not expected it. However, she expressed a grateful sense of his services, and disposed herself to wait with patience for the arrival of Mr. Damer, who alone could determine her destiny.

CHAP. XIV.

CONTAINING SEVERAL MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

HENRIETTA had been about a fortnight in the house of Mrs. Willis, whose good sense and polite behaviour

had entirely won her esteem, when, on a sudden, she became reserved and thoughtful, and often failed in those little attentions which mark respect, and an extreme willingness to oblige. She, who had avoided the least appearance of curiosity to know more of her affairs than what she pleased to disclose, now asked questions with an inquisitive air, and seemed to seek for occasions of collecting a fuller knowledge of her from her conversation.

Henrietta had insisted upon her being made acquainted with her true name and circumstances, from the time that Mr. Damer had acknowledged to her aunt that she was under his care, which had then produced no other alteration in Mrs. Willis than rather an increase of respect towards her, which she conceived due to her birth.

The young lady, whose extreme sensibility was not the least of her misfortunes, observed her increasing coldness, and suffered great uneasiness. She had willingly indulged a tenderness and esteem for her; and was concerned to find, from her altered behaviour, that either she had failed in her endeavours to acquire the friendship of Mrs. Willis, or that the woman whom she had conceived so good an opinion of, was in reality not deserving of hers.

However, she was determined not to let Mr. Damer perceive that she was dissatisfied with her behaviour; and she continued to live with her in the same easy manner as formerly, notwithstanding the coldness and constraint with which she was now treated.

Mr. Damer scarce ever failed to call and see her once a day; but one day he returned about an hour after he had been with her, and told her he had just received letters from his father, in which he acquainted him that Mrs. Willis would in a few days have several foreign merchants in her house, whom he had recommended to lodge with her; and that, his stay in Holland being protracted for some time longer, he thought it would not be proper for Miss Courteney to reside with Mrs. Willis till his return, as her house would be full of men.

'My father,' added Mr. Damer, 'desires me to ask you, Miss, whether you have any objection to go into the country for a few weeks. He has a distant relation, a widow, who lives

‘at Hampstead, with whom he says he will be glad to find you at his return. He begs you will excuse his not writing to you, having the gout still in his hand; and desires me to assure you of his tenderest concern for your welfare.’

A week before, Henrietta would have thought it a misfortune to have left Mrs. Willis to go into any other lodging; but she was so piqued by her behaviour, that she heard this news without any uneasiness, and told Mr. Damer she would implicitly follow her guardian's directions.

He said he would conduct her to his cousin's himself; and took leave of her, after he had desired her to be ready for her little journey the next day.

Mrs. Willis came up to her apartment soon after Mr. Damer went away. ‘I hear I am soon to lose you, Miss,’ said she, entering. ‘Yes,’ replied Miss Courteney coolly, ‘such is my guardian's pleasure; but,’ added she, smiling, ‘you will not miss me; you will have other company.’—‘Other company!’ repeated Mrs. Willis.

‘Mr. Damer tells me,’ said Miss Courteney, ‘that your house will be full soon; some gentlemen recommended by his father will be here.’

‘It is strange,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘that I should know nothing of it. Have you had a letter from your guardian, Madam?’

‘No,’ replied Miss Courteney; ‘but his son has heard from him. But,’ pursued she, after a little pause, ‘it is strange, as you say, that you should not know you are to have new lodgers.’

Mrs. Willis looked at her attentively, as she spoke these words: ‘May I ask you, Miss,’ said she, ‘the cause of your sudden removal?’

‘I know of none,’ replied Miss Courteney; ‘but that, my guardian thinks it will not be proper for me to stay among so many gentlemen as will shortly be your lodgers.’

‘I wish there had been a better reason than that,’ said Mrs. Willis; ‘for I am very sure I am to have no lodgers recommended by the elder Mr. Damer, otherwise I should have known it.’

‘Has not his son told you so?’ asked Miss Courteney, in great confusion of thought.

‘He told me nothing,’ replied Mrs. Willis, ‘but that you are to leave me to-morrow.’

‘Lord bless me!’ cried the young lady, in great emotion, ‘what can this mean!’

‘Suffer me,’ said Mrs. Willis, looking on her with tenderness and concern, ‘to ask you a few questions: when you know my motives, I am sure you will not think that it is an impertinent curiosity which makes me take this liberty, but my anxiety for you.’

‘Dear Madam,’ interrupted Miss Courteney, ‘ask me what you please: you alarm me excessively.’

‘I would not alarm you,’ said Mrs. Willis; ‘but I will own to you that I have fears; nay, more, that I have had doubts; but I see I have been to blame with regard to the latter. Has Mr. Damer shewn you his father's letters, Miss?’

‘Shewn them to me!’ repeated Henrietta, ‘no—but sure—dear Mrs. Willis, explain yourself—I am ready to sink with the apprehensions you have raised in my mind.’

‘Compose yourself, my dear,’ said Mrs. Willis, drawing her chair nearer to her, and taking her hand tenderly. ‘I mean you well; be assured I do: and now I will tell you all that has been upon my mind for several days past. Never did I imagine that I should entertain unfavourable suspicions of the son of my benefactor; but indeed, my dear Miss, I am afraid he has not acted ingenuously with you.’

That moment a loud knocking at the door interrupted Mrs. Willis. She started from her chair. ‘Who can this be?’ said she, in some surprise; ‘I will go and see.’ She ran hastily out of the room; but returning again instantly, ‘Possibly,’ said she, ‘it may be Mr. Damer: remember, Miss, that it is my advice to you, not to leave my house, if he should desire you, at least till you have heard what I have to say.’

She uttered these words with extreme earnestness and concern, and went immediately down stairs, leaving Henrietta in an agony of doubt, anxiety, and astonishment.

Her surprise kept her motionless in her chair, till she was roused by the voice of a woman upon the stairs that led to her apartment, whom she heard say, with great

great haughtiness of accent—'No, there is no occasion for that ceremony; I shall go in without introduction, I assure you.'

She suddenly started from her chair, and was going towards the door, when she saw it flung open with some violence, and a lady of a very disagreeable figure, but richly dressed, and in the utmost extremity of the fashion, appear at the entrance.

Miss Courteney, recovering a little from her surprize, looked at the lady, in order to recollect whether she had ever seen her before; but, being wholly unacquainted with her features, and observing that she stood still and gazed at her without speaking, she concluded the visit could not be designed for her.

'I fancy, Madam,' said she, approaching her, 'you are mistaken; I am not the person you seek.'

'No, Madam,' returned the lady with an emphasis, 'I am not mistaken;' then throwing herself haughtily into a chair, 'I shall not ask your leave,' said she, with a malignant smile, 'to sit down in this apartment; I may take that liberty with what belongs to Mr. Damer. Do you know me, pray, Madam?'

'Not I, truly,' replied Miss Courteney, indignation at this insolent treatment having banished her former terror and surprize; and seating herself, with a careless air, just opposite to her, 'Pray let me know what is your business with me,' said she.

'Pert creature!' said the stranger, affecting contempt, while her lips quivered with rage, and her whole frame seemed convulsed with the violence of her emotions: 'What! you would have me understand you to be a woman of fortune, would you not? Upon my word,' said she, looking round her, 'this is a very handsome apartment. Your dressing-room, forsooth! You have your forms, no doubt, and receive company in your dressing-room in a morning. A very genteel dishabille, too; and your face varnished over so nicely! Who would not conclude that white and red to be natural?'

'You are come here to insult me, I find,' said Henrietta, her fine face glowing with indignation. 'I cannot imagine what cause I have given you for this strange rudeness. I never, as I can remember, saw you before; and

insist upon your quitting my apartment. You can have no business with me, I am sure.'

'Indeed but I have, minx,' said the stranger, with the pale rage of a fury; 'and my business is to turn you out of this apartment: my fortune shall not be wasted in supporting such wretches.'

'Your fortune!' cried Miss Courteney, in astonishment: 'what have I to do with you, or your fortune? Who are you?'

This moment Mrs. Willis entered the room: 'Excuse me, ladies,' said she; 'I heard high words between you.'

'Ladies!' interrupted the stranger: 'how dare you, woman, join me with such a creature! What business have you to intrude?'

'Madam,' replied Mrs. Willis, 'I came to inform this young lady, my boarder, who you are: she does not know you.—Miss, this is young Mr. Damer's lady.'

'What!' cried Henrietta, in the utmost astonishment, 'is Mr. Damer married?'

'Oh—you are surprized, then,' said the lady, with a sneer: 'disappointed too, perhaps. You had the confidence, I suppose, to think he would have married you one of these days! Tell me, you wicked thing, did he ever give you such hopes? Oh, I could tear his eyes out!' said she, rising, and walking about the room like one frantick, while the enormous length of her negligee swept the room, like the train of a tragedy-queen. 'A wretch, to use me thus! Me, who have brought him such a fortune!—But I'll be revenged: he shall never have a quiet moment; I'll make him know what it is to slight a woman of virtue.'

All this time Henrietta continued silent, rooted in her chair, and with difficulty restrained the anguish of her heart from rising to her eyes, lest this outrageous woman of virtue should exult in her distress: yet she saw that she was betrayed; that Mr. Damer had acted weakly, if not basely: her reputation was ruined, yet she would not stoop so low as to enter into any justification of herself to a woman who had treated her so cruelly, upon a bare suspicion. The pride of affronted virtue came to her aid, against that torrent of overwhelming grief which had for some moments absorbed

forbed all her faculties: she rose from her chair, and approaching Mrs. Damer—

‘The error you are in,’ said she, ‘would have moved my compassion, had you treated me with less insolence. I scorn to undeceive you. Go, learn from your husband who I am; and blush, if you can, for the injurious language you have given a person as much your superior by birth, as in that virtue perhaps of which you boast, and which has not withheld you from such indecent transports of jealousy, as it would become a virtuous woman to suppress.’

The superiority with which she spoke, the dignity of her air and manner, struck her mean-souled adversary with such awe, that she continued silent for some moments, with her haggard looks fixed on her. Envy, at the view of so lovely a form, added new stings to her rage and jealousy. At length, she poured forth a torrent of reproaches, with such eagerness of malice, that her words were scarce intelligible.

‘I am not used to scolding,’ said Miss Courteney, calmly, retiring towards her bed-chamber; ‘and you, Mrs. Damer, seem to be an excellent scold.’

The lady, provoked at this appellation, employed the coarsest language imaginable to express her resentment of the injury; but Miss Courteney took shelter in her bed-chamber, the door of which she double-locked.

‘Insolent trollop!’ said Mrs. Damer, raising her voice that she might hear her; ‘call me scold! I scorn your words, you saucy, impudent, audacious hussy: I never could scold in my life—no, you dirty puss—I am a woman of breeding; I am none of your beggarly quality: I had forty thousand pounds to my portion, you proud, paltry minx.—Scold! call me a scold—’

‘Pray, Madam, compose yourself,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘and do me the favour to walk down into my parlour. Here is some mistake. I am pretty certain you have injured this young lady by your suspicions.’

‘Young lady!’ interrupted Mrs. Damer, ‘what makes her a lady?—A fine world it is, now-a-days, when beggars are called ladies. I would fain know what fortune she has to put her upon a footing with ladies.’

‘I know nothing of her fortune,’ said Mrs. Willis.

‘Fortune! poor wretch!’ said Mrs. Damer: ‘a few paltry hundreds. Such ladies! Suppose her grandfather was an earl, has she a fortune? Answer me that.’

‘I don’t know, really,’ replied Mrs. Willis. ‘Well, then,’ said Mrs. Damer, ‘why do you give her a title: she has no right to?—But why do I talk to you, vile wretch? you are my husband’s confident.’

This thought renewed all her rage, and she loaded Mrs. Willis with such shocking invectives, that the poor woman could not refrain from tears.

‘Your husband’s father, Madam,’ said she, ‘has been a generous benefactor to me: I consider that, and will be patient under your abuse.’

The word *abuse* was such a charge upon this lady’s want of breeding, that she called Mrs. Willis a hundred saucy jades, for daring to say that she was capable of abusing any body; and having almost exhausted her spirits with the violence of her passions, and finding that Mrs. Willis sat silent, and took no farther notice of what she said, she flounced out of the room, declaring, that her father-in-law should know that she acted as procuress for his son, and that she should return to her rags and poverty again.

Mrs. Willis thought her behaviour dispensed with her from treating her with that respect which she would have otherwise paid to Mr. Damer’s daughter-in-law, and therefore did not offer to wait on her down stairs, but rung the bell for somebody to attend her; and, locking the door after her, she tapped gently at Miss Courteney’s chamber-door, telling her that Mrs. Damer was gone.

‘Who is this fury?’ said the young lady, as she came out. ‘You have been treated very ill by her, Mrs. Willis; I am sorry for it.’—‘And I am sorry for what you have suffered, my dear Miss,’ replied Mrs. Willis; ‘but Mr. Damer is to blame for it all. I am now sure you are entirely innocent.’

‘Innocent!’ repeated Miss Courteney, with a sigh. ‘How low am I fallen, when that could ever be doubted! But, Mrs. Willis, you knew, it seems, that Mr. Damer was married; I am surprized you never mentioned his wife to me.’

‘And

‘And are you not surprized, Miss,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘that Mr. Damer never mentioned her to you?’

‘To be sure that is very strange,’ replied Henrietta; ‘what could he mean by it?’

‘Ah! Miss,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘a very little reflection on Mr. Damer’s behaviour might have informed you that he is in love with you.’

‘In love with me!’ cried Henrietta, blushing with shame and resentment.

‘Yes,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘in love with you; if that can be called love which seeks the ruin of it’s object. I saw it in his looks, his words, cautious as they were; his whole behaviour shewed it but too plainly.’

‘And this man married too!’ cried Henrietta, lifting up her eyes. ‘To what have I, by one rash step, reduced myself! But still, Mrs. Willis, my first difficulty recurs, why did you avoid speaking of his wife to me?’

‘Hear me, my dear, with patience,’ interrupted Mrs. Willis: ‘I shall be very free; but my plainness ought not to offend you, since it is a mark of my sincerity.’ Mrs. Willis paused here a moment, and then proceeded, as will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. XV.

IN WHICH THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES
ARE PARTLY EXPLAINED.

‘YOU may remember I told you, soon after you came here, that before I went to Leghorn, I heard Mr. Damer was courting the daughter of a rich citizen: I had been returned but three or four days, when he came to me to know if I could accommodate a young lady, a ward of his father’s, with lodging and board; to which I readily consented.

‘It is no flattery, Miss, to tell you that, when I saw you, I was charmed with your person and behaviour: your beauty, and Mr. Damer’s extreme assiduity, made it seem highly probable that he loved you. I set myself to examine his behaviour, and the observations I made on it confirmed my suspicions. I had then heard nothing of his being married, having upon my return been so taken up with my domestic affairs, that I had no leisure

to make or receive visits, from which I could receive any information concerning what had happened in my absence.

‘I was a little surprized to find that you had been introduced to me under a feigned name, and that you were not called Benson, but Courteney. However, I made no reflections upon that circumstance, till, about two days afterwards, I accidentally heard that Mr. Damer had been married two months; then it was that, in my astonishment at his so cautiously avoiding any mention of his wife, I was led to reflect upon what you yourself had informed me of your situation; your flight from your friends, Mr. Damer’s apparent tenderness for you, awakened suspicions, I own it, disadvantageous to you.

‘I waited impatiently for the hour of Mr. Damer’s visiting you, and the moment I saw him, wished him joy on his marriage, expressing my surprize that I should not have heard of that event from himself. He coloured, and seemed in great confusion; and, after a little pause—“Have you said any thing of it to Miss Courteney?” said he.

‘I replied, that I had heard the news but an hour before, and had not seen you since.

“You will oblige me,” said he, “if you will not mention it to her.” I stared. “My wife,” continued he, “is the most unreasonable woman in the world; she has taken it into her head to be horribly jealous of me, though we have been married so short a time. It was a match (and he sighed) of my father’s making—but I assure you I am very unhappy.”

“I am sorry for it, Sir,” interrupted I; “but what reasons have you for concealing from Miss Courteney that you are married?”

“It is a sad thing, Mrs. Willis,” said he, “when a man is not master in his own family.”—“I hope that is not your case, Sir,” answered I. “Indeed but it is,” he replied. “Miss Courteney, you know, is agreeable.”—“Oh! very agreeable,” said I. “My wife is of such an unaccountable humour,” resumed he, “that I durst not offer Miss Courteney, though my father is her guardian, an asylum in my house, till her relations were re-

"conciled to her, lest I should be teased with jealousy and suspicions."

"I am persuaded, Sir," said I, "that Miss Courteney has too much good sense to take it amiss that you did not invite her to your house, as things were circumstanced. She has more reason to be displeased at your concealing your marriage from her, which every body knows, and which she would soon know if she lived less retired."

"Let me entreat you, Mrs. Willis," said he, "not to mention it to Miss Courteney. I would not upon any account that she should know I am married, yet could not offer her an apartment in my house."

"Indeed, Sir," said I, smiling, "you make this matter of more consequence than you need to do; Miss Courteney will not consider it as any slight to her."

"She must either think herself slighted," resumed he, with quickness, "by my not inviting her, or she will divine the reason, which would be worse; for in that case her delicacy is so extreme, that she would never allow me to see her."

"Ah," thought I, "is it so!" He perceived he had almost betrayed himself; and changed the discourse, asking me many questions about my husband, whose diligence and fidelity he highly extolled, dropping hints of designs in his favour; and indeed it is in his power to be of great service to him.

"But I had no satisfaction," pursued Mrs. Willis, "in what he said; for, to my apprehension, it appeared as if he sought to bribe me into a concurrence with his designs, whatever they were. Therefore I sat silent, and I believe discovered by my looks, that I did not like his proceedings; for he rose up, and, with an air of some resentment, said,

"That his father would be in town in a few days, and would then dispose of you properly; and that in the mean time he must insist upon my being silent with regard to his marriage, since it would throw him into great confusion if you knew it; and added, that he thought he might reasonably expect this instance of my complaisance."

"I told him that I was very glad to hear his father would be in town so

soon, and would take the young lady under his own care: that, since he deferred it, I would not be the first to acquaint you with his marriage. I owned his reasons appeared to me very whimsical; but that it was not my business to be impertinently curious; and that I should concern myself no farther about it."

"He seemed pleased with this indifference, and went up stairs to see you. I had already taken my resolution, my dear Miss Courteney, which was to write to his father, and acquaint him with the whole transaction. I was willing to leave the young gentleman in a false security, that he might not suspect my design, and take measures to render it useless; and not being sure how far even you might be trusted, for my suspicions of you, though weakened, were not yet removed, I thought it best to say nothing that could alarm you, till I had received the old gentleman's advice how to act; but my measures were broke by Mr. Damer's resolving to take you from my house."

"He came into the parlour to me to-day, before you saw him, and told me, that he had directions from his father to send you into the country, because he did not expect to return for some time yet, and he did not approve of your residing in London till he came."

"You may easily imagine, Miss, that I was not satisfied with the cause he assigned for this sudden resolution. I was now alarmed for you; and judged it necessary to acquaint you immediately with Mr. Damer's being married, that you might not fall ignorantly into his snares. I began with asking you questions, to which the openness and simplicity of your answers convinced me that you were imposed upon greatly by Mr. Damer. I was going to explain myself clearly, when Mrs. Damer's arrival interrupted me. You know with what earnestness I intreated you not to leave my house; I was apprehensive that he was come to hurry you away, and I trembled for the danger to which you were exposed."

"When I left you, I met Mrs. Damer upon the stairs; and, not knowing her, I asked who it was she desired to see?—"The young woman that lodges with you," said she, in a

‘tone of voice that surprized me. I told her, I would go and acquaint you that there was a lady wanted to speak to you: but she rushed by me, saying, “There is no need of that ceremony, I shall introduce myself.”’

‘Her behaviour recalling to my mind what Mr. Damer had said of his wife’s jealousy, I suspected this was the lady; and, to be assured, I enquired of a servant, who attended her, who she was. The moment I knew it was really her, I flew up stairs, being full of concern for you; for I saw a storm in her countenance, and dreaded the consequence. The poor young man is indeed plagued with a jealous wife; and in that particular he told the truth. But, my dear Miss, I see plainly that the mystery he has made of his connections with you has roused her suspicions.’

‘It is all an incomprehensible mystery to me,’ said Henrietta, sighing: ‘Mr. Damer has certainly deceived me, for what purposes I know not; but I know that I will never see him again, but in the presence of his father, to have this dark affair cleared up.’

‘But, my dear Mrs. Willis, how shall I express what my heart feels for you, who have shewn so tender a regard for my honour and quiet! How miserable might I have been, had you been less good! I am sure I may rely upon your prudence. Advise me, then, what to do: you know my story; you see my present situation. I have no friend, no protector.’

‘My dear Miss,’ interrupted Mrs. Willis, ‘there is but one thing for you to do, and that is, to return to your aunt.’

‘How can I appear before her,’ said Henrietta, ‘after having so greatly obliged her by my flight; a flight which has had such disgraceful consequences? Besides, do not the same motives that obliged me to leave her, still subsist? and are they not equally strong against my returning?’

‘I would not pain you, my dear Miss,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘with the recollection of a past error, were it not to make it useful to you in your present circumstances. Warned as you were of your aunt’s designs, it was impossible to carry them into execution without your concurrence: your flight therefore was not necessary; and, if

not necessary, surely it was highly imprudent; and, in my opinion, can only be repaired by a voluntary return. Need I tell a young lady of your delicacy, that imputations, however unjust, sully, if they do not stain a character? Do you think this woman’s frantick jealousy will be silent? How can you otherwise prove the falshood of her assertions, than by returning to your aunt, and making yourself accountable to her for all your actions? Nothing can be more unfortunate for youth and beauty, than to be left to its own guidance and discretion. The world seldom attributes too much prudence to youth: however regular our conduct may be in that gay time of life, it is supposed to be owing to the care and attention of our parents or relations, rather than to our own circumspection. Can a young woman, who voluntarily sets herself free from that restraint, hope to escape unfavourable censures, when those who owe it to chance only that they are not subjected to any controul, suffer perhaps in the opinion of the world, because they are possessed of a liberty which they may make an improper use of?’

‘You see, my dear, to what inconveniencies you have been exposed; these are the necessary consequences of your unprotected state: there is no doubt but you would repel every attempt to the prejudice of your honour; but does not modesty, if not virtue, suffer by such attempts? and can you acquit yourself of imprudence, when you reflect that you have thrown yourself into a situation which renders you liable to them?’

‘It was indeed,’ said Henrietta, who, by her blushes and confusion, acknowledged the strength of her reasons, ‘imprudence to throw myself into this situation, but it would be guilt to continue in it. Oh! that I had had such a friend as you to advise with at Windsor, I should never have taken a step, which I blush to think of now. I will return to my aunt, Mrs. Willis; I will throw myself upon her mercy; and if I must be made a sacrifice of—’

‘Indeed, my dear,’ interrupted Mrs. Willis, ‘these fears are groundless: you cannot possibly be married against your own consent; and you have it always in your power to refuse. As for the convent, you cannot be cheated into

'it, that is certain, since you know she had such a design, and may guard against it.'

'But suppose,' said Miss Courteney, 'that she should not receive me again? Mr. Damer found her inexorable.'

'Ah! my dear,' replied Mrs. Willis, shaking her head, 'Mr. Damer was not a fit person to be trusted with such a negotiation: but, however that may be, I am sure, when your aunt knows in what manner he has acted, and the reasons you have to distrust him, she will think it necessary to take you out of his hands. Your return to her will remove her suspicions against you, and convince her that it was from a sudden impulse of fear only, that you left her; and that you had no desire of disposing of yourself contrary to her inclinations.'

'But I have one favour to beg of you,' said Miss Courteney, 'and that is, that you will go along with me to my aunt; resentment may shut her ears to all that I can say to her, but I think she cannot resist your pleas, urged with that good sense you possess in so high a degree.'

'Doubt not, my dear,' said Mrs. Willis, 'but I am ready to do you any service in my power.'

'What hinders us then from going directly?' cried Henrietta, eagerly; 'we can get a post-chaise, and—'

'The day is too far advanced,' replied Mrs. Willis; 'we will, if you please, set out early to-morrow morning; I will take care to have a post-chaise in readiness: in the mean time, you may depend upon being secure from any disagreeable visits here; neither Mr. Damer nor his fury of a wife shall see you, unless you desire they should.'

'Notwithstanding the treatment she gave me,' said Miss Courteney, 'I would rather see her than him; but you may well imagine, Mrs. Willis, that I do not wish to see either of them.'

'Make yourself easy, my dear,' said Mrs. Willis; 'you shall meet with no insult of any kind in my house.'

Henrietta embraced her with tears of gratitude, which the good woman returned with true maternal tenderness, and then left her, to give the necessary directions for their little journey the next day.



H E N R I E T T A.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAP. I.

IN WHICH OUR HEROINE MEETS
WITH A NEW DISAPPOINTMENT,
AND SOME FARTHER INSTANCES
OF MISS WOODEY'S FRIENDSHIP.



HENRIETTA, being now left to her own reflections, beheld her late conduct in a light in which it had never appeared to her before; the sense of blame so justly incurred, filled her with remorse and shame. Hitherto she had industriously aggravated the cause of her fears, that she might not stand self-condemned; which, to an ingenuous mind, is of all others the greatest evil: but Mrs. Willis had stated her case too justly.

What force could give her unwilling hand to the old baronet? How could she be cheated into a convent, when she was forewarned of the design? From her obstinate opposition to her aunt's will, nothing worse could have happened than the loss of her favour and protection, which by her flight she had anticipated. She now wondered at the unreasonableness of her fears, and looked back with the deepest regret upon the errors they had occasioned.

These melancholy thoughts, and her anxiety about the reception her aunt would give her, kept her waking almost

the whole night. As soon as it was light, she rose, and dressed herself, impatient to be gone. Mrs. Willis, at her summons, made haste to join her: and, when they had breakfasted, set out immediately upon their journey; Henrietta full of perturbation and inquietude, Mrs. Willis with that serenity which attends the consciousness of doing what is right.

The young lady, as she drew nearer her aunt's dwelling, found her emotions increase: one while her imagination represented Lady Meadows as kind and indulgent, ready to forgive her error, and to restore her to her affection; and, immediately after, she would tremble with the apprehension of her severe reproaches.

Mrs. Willis perceived her uneasiness, and used her utmost endeavours to compose her: but when the chaise stopped at the door, she was near falling into a fainting fit; and her friend was obliged to ask if Lady Meadows was at home, for Henrietta was not able to speak.

The servant-maid who opened the door having got a glimpse of the young lady as she sat in the chaise, eagerly flew to the side of it. 'O my dear Miss!' said she, in a transport of joy, 'is it you?'

'How do you do, Jenny?' said Miss Courteney; and, trembling, added, 'is my aunt at home?'

'My lady,' said the girl, 'set out two days ago for her seat in Devonshire. Oh! Miss, here has been sad doings!'

doings! Poor Mrs. White is turned away: there came an ugly mischief-making lady from London, and told my lady a heap of stories about you, and so Mrs. White was turned away. But won't you please to alight, Miss?

Henrietta looked at Mrs. Willis, for she knew not herself what to resolve on, the news she had heard having thrown her into the utmost perplexity. 'I wish we could see Mrs. White,' said Mrs. Willis to her in a whisper.

Miss Courteney immediately enquired of the maid, how long Mrs. White had left her aunt, and where she was to be found? The girl told her she had been gone above a week, and that she believed she was at her sister's in Windsor. Henrietta had often heard her mention her sister, who was married to a tradesman in Windsor; and, after she had taken leave of the poor affectionate girl, who wept to see her depart again, she gave the post-boy directions where to drive.

Mrs. White, when the chaise stopped at the door, heard from a little parlour where she was sitting the voice of Miss Courteney enquiring for her, and flew with trembling eagerness to meet her.

'Oht Miss,' said she, taking her hand, and leading her into the room, 'I am rejoiced to see you: where have you been all this time? What an unfortunate creature was I to be the means of your taking such a rash resolution! Oh that I had kept what I knew to myself! But, surely, it was very unkind in you not to acquaint me with your design, nor to ask my advice; I might have prevented all this trouble. But, thank Heaven, you are safe and well—well I see you are.'

Henrietta then interrupting the good woman, who, between chiding and fondness, had taken no notice of Mrs. Willis, —'That I am safe,' said she, 'I am obliged to this gentlewoman; for some strange treachery was preparing for me, I believe, but her care has prevented it.'

'Treachery!' interrupted Mrs. White—'Aye, you have met with enough of that, I suppose: there was your new-found friend and acquaintance, Miss—I forget her name, whom you told all your secrets to; you made no scruple to trust her, Miss, though you was so reserved to me; she was the occasion of my losing my place. Ah! Miss—but I will not upbraid

you; I see you are concerned: God forbid I should add to your uneasiness; I have suffered greatly upon your account. It was very unkind in you to put it in the power of a stranger to do me so much mischief: surely, I did not deserve such a return from you. But, God knows my heart, I would not upbraid you for the world; no, I scorn it; but I have been the greatest sufferer, I am sure, and yet I meant well.'

'Was not the lady's name Woodby?' interrupted Henrietta, impatient to hear the particulars of this new act of treachery and baseness.

'Aye, Woodby,' replied Mrs. White, 'a disagreeable creature as ever my eyes beheld. I shall never forget how she sidled into my lady's dressing-room, and, half out of breath, told her, she had taken the liberty to wait on her to bring her some news of her niece. I could not hear distinctly all she said, for my lady ordered me to withdraw; but I put my ear to the key hole, as I had done once before for your service, Miss, which I have reason to repent, Heaven knows!—but what is past cannot be helped—it is not my way to rip up things that are past.'

'Well,' said Henrietta, 'but what did you hear?'

'Nay, for that matter,' resumed Mrs. White, 'I may draw myself into another premise perhaps: after what I have suffered, I ought to be cautious; but I love you, Miss, and must tell you every thing, whatever it cost me, and that you have experienced already. Well, she made up a horrible story, that you had gone away suddenly from lodgings where she visited you; and, notwithstanding the friendship there was between you, (and a great clutter she made with that word) you went away without giving her any notice of your intention; and this she said had a strange appearance.'

Miss Courteney lifted up her eyes here, in astonishment at what she heard.

'As for me,' continued Mrs. White, 'she did my business in an instant; for, as soon as she was gone, my lady sent for me, and, in a violent rage, told me I should not stay another night in her house. She was informed, she said, that I had been the cause of your running away, by filling your head with notions of her designing to confine you in a convent. She would

hear

‘hear nothing that I could say in my own defence; and dismissed me that very evening.’

‘I am excessively sorry,’ said Henrietta, ‘that you should suffer so much on my account. It was indeed very imprudent in me to be so communicative to Miss Woodby, but I could not imagine she was capable of so much treachery.’

‘But how have you been able to conceal yourself so well, Miss, from the enquiries of all your friends?’ said Mrs. White. ‘Mr. Damer, it seems, your guardian’s son, knew not where to find you.’

‘Did Mr. Damer say, he knew not where I was?’ cried Miss Courteney, in astonishment.

‘He told Mr. Danvers so,’ replied Mrs. White, ‘who went several times, by my lady’s orders, to enquire for you.’

‘Was there ever such complicated treachery!’ said Henrietta, looking at Mrs. Willis, with tears in her eyes. ‘Well, my dear,’ said the good woman, ‘there is at least this advantage in misfortunes, that they bring us at last to wisdom. You will for the future be more cautious how you engage in such perilous enterprizes.’

‘Aye, Miss,’ said Mrs. White, ‘and how you trust false friends to the prejudice of your true ones. You see what it has cost me.—But no more of that—I can forget and forgive.’

‘Well, and what is now to be done?’ said Miss Courteney, folding her hands with an air of despondence.

‘It is easy to answer that question,’ said Mrs. Willis; ‘you must write to your aunt, my dear, and give her an account of all that has happened to you. There is certainly something to condemn in what you have done; but in what you have suffered, there is much to be pitied. I am persuaded her tenderness will silence her resentment. I hoped to have left you with your aunt,’ Miss, continued Mrs. Willis; ‘but since that cannot be, you will return with me, I suppose.’

‘To be sure I will,’ said Miss Courteney; ‘with whom, in my present situation, can I be so happy as with you?’

Mrs. White desired she might be permitted to come and see her: to which Henrietta readily consented; promising, if she was reconciled to her aunt, to use

her utmost endeavours to reinstate her in her place.

CHAP. II.

WHICH THROWS NEW LIGHTS UPON MR. DAMER’S BEHAVIOUR, AND CONTAINS A VERY IMPROVING CONVERSATION.

THE two ladies being again seated in their post-chaise, Mrs. Willis kindly applied herself to comfort her fair companion, whose affecting silence shewed a deeper sense of her new disappointment than any words could express. However, Miss Courteney felt in reality fewer perturbations and less anxiety in her return, than when she began her journey. So true it is, that, when we hope little, we fear little likewise.

She now looked upon her aunt’s affection as irrecoverable; Miss Woodby’s vile insinuations had strengthened her suspicions; Mr. Damer, when he found himself detected, would doubtless account for his behaviour in a manner unfavourable to her; her unhappy flight had given such a colour to her succeeding actions, as rendered any justification of herself hopeless; and the insidious chaplain might now with ease confirm those prejudices he had raised.

In this manner she reasoned herself into a belief that her misfortune was irremediable: despair, as an ingenious writer observes, being that ease to the mind which mortification is to the flesh, Henrietta found some relief in being freed from that vicissitude of hopes and fears which had so long held her mind in the most racking suspense; and, with a kind of gloomy satisfaction, resigned herself to all the bitterness of her fate.

Mrs. Willis, who knew not the peculiarities of Lady Meadows’s temper, or, if she had, would not perhaps have considered, that obstinate people are ever most obstinate in error, thought all things might be set right again, by Miss Courteney’s giving a candid narrative of what had happened to her since her leaving her; she therefore pressed the young lady to delay writing to her aunt no longer than the next day.

‘There are some cases,’ said Mrs. Willis to her, when she saw her sitting down to write, ‘in which simplicity is the

' the greatest refinement of art; yours
' is one of them: be as simple and in-
' genuous as you can in the account you
' give your aunt, and let the facts speak
' for themselves.'

Henrietta followed her advice, and re-
lated every part of her conduct since she
had left her, and the treachery and de-
ceit that had been used towards her, with
the utmost plainness and sincerity; and
saw that she had made her letter more af-
fecting by its simplicity, than she could
have done by the nicest touches of art.
Mrs. Willis read it, and approved of it;
and it was immediately dispatched to the
post.

Scarce was this little affair over, when
Mr. Damer sent in his name.

' I like this piece of ceremony,' said
Mrs. Willis; ' it looks as if the man
' was ashamed of what he has done: do
' you chuse to see him, Miss?'

' Oh! no,' replied Henrietta; ' it
' would be strange, indeed, if I was
' willing to see a man whom you suspect
' of having such shocking designs, and
' who I am sure has not acted honestly.'

' Well, then,' said Mrs. Willis, ' I
' will go down to him, and hear what
' he has to say.'

She returned again in less than an
hour, smiling. ' This young man,'
said she, ' does not want sense. What
' would you say, Miss, if I was to tell
' you that he has persuaded me he has
' acted very right, and with the best in-
' tentions in the world?'

' I should say, that I am less unhappy
' than I thought I was,' replied Miss
Courteney; ' for surely it is a great mis-
' fortune to meet with persons who abuse
' our confidence and the good opinions
' we have of them.'

' That misfortune,' said Mrs. Willis,
' will in time become so common, that
' you will feel it less sensibly than you
' do now. The only way to avoid be-
' ing deceived, is to be always upon
' your guard against deceit.'

' That is to say, I must be always
' suspicious,' said Henrietta: ' this may
' be a very prudent maxim, but my heart
' disavows it.'

' Alas! my dear,' replied Mrs. Wil-
lis, ' we all enter upon the world with
' high notions of disinterestedness, friend-
' ship, sincerity, and candour: but ex-
' perience shows us, that these qualities
' exist not, or among so very few, that

' it does not fall to the lot of one mortal
' in a thousand to meet with them in
' those we contract friendships with. The
' frequent disappointments we suffer in
' the search of them, make suspicion
' grow into a habit of thinking, which,
' if it lessens our enjoyments, lessens our
' inconveniencies likewise.'

' Then I,' said Miss Courteney, ' shall
' be always exposed to inconveniencies;
' for I am sure I can never bring myself
' to suspect persons who appear deserv-
' ing of my good opinion: and indeed
' I think it is more honourable to be of-
' ten deceived, than to be always doubt-
' ing.'

' But it is not so safe,' replied Mrs.
Willis, smiling: ' however, my dear,
' in unexperienced youth like yours, this
' way of thinking is meritorious; the
' faults of the world can only be learned
' by a long acquaintance with it, and
' by suffering from that acquaintance.
' Those who derive this kind of know-
' ledge from the heart rather than the
' head, are indeed safe themselves, but
' dangerous to all others.'

' But I will keep you no longer in
' suspense with regard to Mr. Damer.
' He has glossed over his behaviour so
' as to make me appear satisfied with it;
' which indeed it is necessary I should,
' if I would not wish to make an enemy
' of him; and a very powerful one he
' might be to my husband.'

' He asked for you as soon as he saw
' me, and did not seem surprized at the
' very slight excuse I made for your not
' seeing him. He expressed great con-
' cern for the treatment you had received
' from his wife; for, in her frantick rage,
' it seems he told him all that had passed
' between you.'

' You find,' said he, ' I did not
' exaggerate my wife's failing.'

' It is a great misfortune,' replied I;
' but, Sir, I think, if you had not made
' a secret of your connections with Miss
' Courteney, Mrs. Damer's jealousy
' would not have had so plausible an
' excuse, nor would the young lady have
' had any reason to complain of you.'

' I should have found it absolutely
' impossible,' said he, ' to have con-
' cerned myself in Miss Courteney's
' affairs, or be of the least use to her,
' had my wife known any thing of the
' matter; the very sight of Miss Cour-
' teney would have roused her suspi-
' cions,

"cious, and have put it out of my power to act either as a friend or guardian by her; and, in her unhappy situation, she had great need of my care and attention."

"However, Sir," replied I, "it was certainly ill-judged to conceal from Miss Courteney that you was married: what must she think of such a strange conduct?"

"Why, Mrs. Willis," resumed he, "I have already told you, that I could not own my marriage to Miss Courteney, without letting her into my reasons for not being able to offer her an asylum in my house during her aunt's displeasure, an offer she had great reason to expect. I was unwilling to expose my wife's foible, and to raise scruples in the young lady's mind, which might prevent her from receiving those little services from me which she had so much need of. I hope you will represent all this to her, and let her know how greatly I am afflicted at what she has suffered."

"To be sure I will," replied I; "but Miss Courteney tells me you have received letters from Mr. Damer, in which he acquaints you that there are some foreign merchants coming to reside in my house, and that she was to be removed for that reason. I surprised her greatly by saying I had heard nothing of it; and, indeed, I am a good deal surprised myself at it."

"Why, to be plain with you, Mrs. Willis," said the young gentleman, "this was only an invention."

"Indeed!" said I, looking very grave: "to be sure you had some good reason for it."

"Doubtless I had," pursued he, "and you yourself shall be judge of my reason. This is a bad world, Mrs. Willis, a very bad world: nothing but stratagems and designs, fraud and cunning. Our sex, Mrs. Willis, is in a state of war with yours; our arms are sighs and vows, and flattery and protestation, and (as in all other warfare) we fight to destroy."

"Bless us!" interrupted Henrietta, half smiling, "what could this fine preface lead to?"

"I protest," resumed Mrs. Willis, laughing, "it was with the utmost difficulty I composed my countenance to

a look of grave attention, while he uttered all this with a solemn accent, and an air of infinite importance."

"Truly, Sir," replied I, "for so young a gentleman, you think very gravely of these matters; it is highly commendable in one of your years."

"Heaven forbid, Mrs. Willis," said he, "that all men should be libertines; but, in short, it was to preserve Miss Courteney from falling into the snares of one, that I formed an excuse for sending her into the country."

"Vile dissembler!" exclaimed Miss Courteney again, glowing with indignation; "preserve me from falling into the snares of a libertine! I hope my own discretion, without any aid from him, was sufficient to guard me against any snares that a libertine could lay for me."

"I hope so too," said Mrs. Willis.

Henrietta blushed a little at this expression, which seemed, she thought, to imply a doubt, but would not interrupt Mrs. Willis again.

"I told you that this gentleman was very artful," continued the good woman, "as you will be convinced by the story he related."

"You must know," said he to me, "looking extremely wise, and lowering his voice, "that when I waited upon Miss Courteney at the lodgings she had taken after she left her aunt, I observed a fine gay young man there, who followed me when I went out, and looked at me in a manner that shewed great curiosity and attention. It came into my head that this might be the spark of whom Miss Courteney's aunt was apprehensive: I discovered that he lodged in the house with the young lady; and this circumstance I liked by no means. I resolved to remove her immediately, and place her with you: she so readily consented to my proposal, that I doubted whether I had not been extremely mistaken in my conjectures concerning this young gentleman; but, a day or two after she was settled with you, my spark came to enquire for her at my house. Now it was plain that Miss Courteney held some correspondence with him, otherwise he could not have known where to come after her."

"I happened not to be at home, and

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"the

“ the servants told him that no such person was there. He came several times, and was always answered in the same manner. His enquiries at length reached the ears of my wife; she desired he might be shewn up to her apartment when he came next; and it was from him that she learned Miss Courteney was under my care.

“ To one of her temper it was enough to know that I had the management of a lady's affairs, to make her suspect that I had a more than ordinary interest in the lady herself. But she concealed her thoughts from me: and I, who was wholly ignorant that this gentleman had seen my wife, was only concerned at the connection there seemed to be between Miss Courteney and him; and therefore fixed upon that stratagem, to remove her out of his reach, without giving her any suspicions of the cause.

“ I have since enquired about the gentleman; and I hear that he is a man of quality, and that he is shortly to be married to a great fortune. Judge now, whether his designs on Miss Courteney could be honourable; and whether I had not reason to act as I did with regard to sending her away?”

“ And now, my dear,” added Mrs. Willis, smiling, “ did you ever hear a more plausible tale?”

“ I have somewhere read it observed, replied Henrietta, “ that we are better deceived by having some truth told us than none. Mr. Damer has put this maxim in practice: his tale is plausible, because part of it is true; but his inferences are all false, and their cause lies too deep for me to discover it.”

She then related succinctly all that had passed in the house of Mrs. Eccles, and that she had earnestly intreated Mr. Damer to dispose of her elsewhere, being resolved, after the affront that had been offered to her, to remain there no longer. She added, that the young lord having hinted his suspicions that Mr. Damer was her lover, she thought herself obliged to tell him his name, and explain the nature of his connections with her; that she might not, by going away with a person unknown, leave room for calumny to slander her.

Mrs. Willis was charmed with this candid account of her conduct, which overthrew all Mr. Damer's insinuations.

She embraced her with great tenderness, “ All will soon be set right,” said she; “ your aunt will receive you with redoubled affection.” Miss Courteney sighed; but having already taken her resolution, she was prepared for whatever events might happen.

CHAP. III.

WHICH WE ARE AFRAID WILL GIVE SOME OF OUR READERS A MEAN OPINION OF OUR HEROINE'S UNDERSTANDING.

TWO days afterwards a letter was brought by the post for Miss Courteney; the direction was in her aunt's hand. She opened it with some trepidation, and found it as follows:

“ HENRIETTA,

“ FOR niece I cannot, after what has happened, call you—If you had not, by the highest imprudence that any young woman could be guilty of, given too much colour for the shocking censures that are cast on you, I might perhaps have been deceived by your plausible account of things. I am sorry to find you have acquired so much art, it is but too sure a proof that you are less innocent; yet it would be easy for me to take to pieces every part of your defence, and shew you the absurdity of it: but this is needless; for whether you are innocent or guilty, you have greatly wounded your reputation, and I can no longer with honour consider you or treat you as my niece.

“ There is but one way left by which you can retrieve your fame and my affection; motives which ought to have some weight with you, but infinitely less than the desire of securing your salvation.

“ I hoped and believed your conversion was near completed, and doubtless it would have been, had not your passions intervened.

“ If you will retire to a convent, and put yourself into a way of being instructed in the true religion, I will pay your pension largely; and the day that sees you reunited to the faith, shall see you restored to my fondest affection, and made sole heiress to my whole estate.

‘estate. Consider well before you determine; and know that, upon any other terms than these, you must not hope for farther notice from me.’

‘F. MEADOWS.’

Although several parts of this letter were extremely shocking both to the delicacy and pride of Henrietta, yet the shining bribe that was offered her to procure her apostacy, made a large compensation. She had now an opportunity given her of making a worthy sacrifice to the religion she believed and professed; a circumstance that exalted her in her own opinion: for her self-love had been deeply wounded by the humiliations she had undergone; and as great delicacy always suffers most, so it enjoys most from its own reflections.

She was not free from a little enthusiasm, that told her it was glorious to suffer in the cause of religion; nor so disinterested as not to feel great pleasure in the thought of being able to free her moral character from injurious suspicions, by so firm an attachment to her religious principles.

Her impatience to answer her aunt’s letter would not allow her time to communicate to Mrs. Willis the contents of it: but, as soon as she had done writing, she sent for the good woman, and put Lady Meadows’s letter into her hands, with such an air of conscious satisfaction, as persuaded her the so much desired reconciliation was effected; but when, upon reading the letter, she found her mistake, she threw it down; and, in a melancholy accent, and a look that expressed the most anxious curiosity, asked her how she had resolved?

‘Read this,’ said Henrietta, giving her the letter she had written; ‘I am sure you will not disapprove of what I have done.’ Mrs. Willis read it eagerly, and found it as follows:

‘MADAM,

‘It is a great grief to me to find that your affection is irrecoverable, for, at the price you have set upon it, I must ever deem it so. If my defence seems absurd, Madam, it is because truth is too weak to combat prejudice. I leave it to time and my future conduct to clear my innocence; and am resolved never to give a confirmation to those aspersions which are cast on my

character, by sacrificing my religion to my interest.’

‘That poverty, which happily is become my choice, will be my best vindication; and, if it affords me no other blessing but that of a good conscience, it will bestow on me the highest that is attainable in this life, and which will enable me to bear cheerfully all the misfortunes that may befall me; among which I shall always look upon the loss of your esteem as the greatest. I am, Madam, with all due gratitude and respect, your obliged and very humble servant,

‘HENRIETTA COURTENEY.’

‘I must approve, nay, admire your resolution, Miss,’ said Mrs. Willis, returning the letter; ‘and, if you persist in it, you will appear to me a wonder.’

‘Do you doubt my persisting in it?’ replied Henrietta.

‘When I consider,’ said Mrs. Willis, ‘your birth, your youth, your beauty, and the expectations you have been encouraged to entertain, I know it must cost you a great deal to throw away the advantages that are offered you, and which possibly you might secure by temporizing at least.’

‘Diffimulation,’ interrupted Henrietta, ‘on any occasion, is mean and scandalous; but, in matters of religion, it is surely a heinous crime; and I hope I am far enough from committing it; but I own I have many motives to stimulate my resolution.’

‘My own imprudence, and the treachery of others, have given a wound to my reputation, which a voluntary poverty can only repair. In this licentious age, she who, with youth, and even the slightest advantages of person, dares to be poor, deserves surely to be thought virtuous; and I shall ever acknowledge the bounty of Providence, that, amidst the unjust censures which have been cast on me, has made an humble lot my choice.’

‘I am satisfied,’ interrupted Mrs. Willis: ‘reason, I see, has a greater share in your so lately formed resolution, than the zeal of enthusiasm, or the suggestions of vanity; and you may believe me a true friend to your fame, when I heartily congratulate you on your present situation. And now,

' my dear Miss, suffer me to assure you of my tenderest friendship; a friendship which cannot be contented with bare professions, and insists upon your putting it to some trial.

' Tell me how I can serve you? O! that you would honour me so far as to let this house be your asylum till fortune does justice to your merit. Condescend to live with me, my dear Miss, and share my little income.'

' You are very kind, dear Mrs. Willis,' replied Henrietta; 'but my circumstances will not permit me to continue your boarder, and no distress shall oblige me to be burdensome to a friend. I have already resolved how to dispose of myself; and, in the scheme I have formed, I shall need your assistance.'

' Tell me, my dear,' cried Mrs. Willis, eagerly, 'how I can be of any use to you?'

' You must,' replied Henrietta, blushing a little, 'you must get me a service, my dear Mrs. Willis.'

' A service!' exclaimed the good woman.

' I am very well qualified,' resumed Henrietta, recovering from her first confusion, and smiling, 'to wait upon a woman of fashion: for my mother gave me a useful as well as genteel education; and this station will be at once private enough to secure me from disagreeable accidents, and publick enough to make my conduct acquit or condemn me.'

' I will not,' added she, observing Mrs. Willis continued silent, 'offer myself to any place by my own name; that would look like an insult upon my great relations; and be perhaps an obstruction to my success. It is sufficient for me; that, whenever I am discovered, it may be in circumstances at which they, not I, need be ashamed.'

' When I first heard you mention this scheme,' said Mrs. Willis, 'I thought I could never be brought to approve it: but a little reflection has convinced me that it may have good consequences. You cannot be long concealed; that graceful form will soon draw notice upon you. Whenever you are known to be in a station so unworthy your birth and merit, the pride of your relations will be roused. How glorious, then,

will this humiliation be for you! Mr. thinks I see their confusion for their neglect of you, and their eagerness to repair it, by restoring you to the rank you was born in. Oh! my dear, you will certainly be happy yet, I am sure you will.'

Henrietta smiled a little at the good woman's sanguine expectations; but, in reality, the same thoughts had made a great impression upon her, and contributed more than she imagined to allay the uneasiness she felt at being reduced to take such a step. By degrees she formed in her own mind so romantick a scene, that she grew impatient to enter upon it, and again intreated the assistance of Mrs. Willis.

The good woman telling her that a cousin of her husband's was a sacquemaker, and in great vogue at the court end of the town, it was agreed that she should go to her, and engage her good offices towards recommending the young lady to a place; it being very likely that, among her customers, who were mostly women of quality, she might hear of one that would suit her.

CHAP. IV.

WHICH CONTAINS VERY TRIFLING MATTERS.

MRS. Willis succeeded beyond her hopes. The mantua-maker had been desired, by a lady she worked for, to look out for a genteel young person to serve her in the quality of her woman; and promised her cousin, that she would mention her friend to the lady the next day, being to wait on her with some cloaths that were to be tried on. She added, that the lady was a citizen, but had an immense fortune, and that her place was certainly a very good one.

Henrietta seemed very well pleased with her landlady's success, though she was not free from some uneasy perturbations at the thoughts of the condition she was so soon to enter upon.

Mrs. Cary did not fail to visit her cousin the next day. 'Well,' said she, 'I have done the young gentlewoman's business: she has nothing to do but to wait upon Miss Cordwain; and, if she likes her figure, she will hire her directly.'

'Why,

'Why, pray,' replied Mrs. Willis, 'what kind of figure will best please this lady?'

'Oh!' cried Mrs. Cary, 'Miss Cordwain's woman must be very genteel, and look like a gentlewoman; the richer she is dressed too, when she goes to wait on her, the better. Every thing about Miss Cordwain must be magnificent. Well,' pursued she, laughing, and taking a pinch of snuff, which produced several little pauses in her discourse, 'it is really surprising to see these little cits, how they mimic people of quality. They must be so extravagantly in the fashion. I vow and protest, the negligee I tried on Miss Cordwain to-day had a train three yards and a half long.'

Henrietta that moment entering the room, Mrs. Willis, seeing her cousin was surprised at her appearance, said, 'This is the young gentlewoman who wants a place.'

The mantua-maker, upon this information, resumed her familiar look and manner; and, throwing herself again upon her chair, took a full survey of the young lady, who thanked her, with some hesitation, and a blush that crimsoned over her face, for the service she had done her.

'I have just been telling my cousin,' said Mrs. Cary, 'that Miss Cordwain, the lady I have recommended you to, Ma'am, is very hard to be pleased. Her woman must look like a lady, forsooth: she has refused three that went to see her place; one, because she had a red hand; it looked, she said, as if the creature had stood at a wash-tub; another, because she went to be hired in a linen gown; and the third, because she had lived with nobody of higher rank than a baronet's wife. But I am sure she can have no objection to you, Ma'am, unless perhaps she may think you too handsome. Do you take snuff, Ma'am?' offering her box, which Henrietta civilly declined.

'But, dear Ma'am,' pursued the mantua-maker, 'who makes your cloaths? I never saw any thing so frightful as the slope of that ruffle; then such a horrid sleeve; it is well you are naturally genteel.'

Henrietta slightly bowed in return for this compliment; and asked her, at what hour it would be proper to wait upon Miss Cordwain?

'About one o'clock in the forenoon,' replied Mrs. Cary; 'that's her breakfast time. Her father, honest man, is in his warehouse before six. But this is his only daughter; and he expects she will be a dutchess, or countess at least. She has fifty thousand pounds.' 'Where does the lady live?' asked Henrietta.

'Here, in one of your filthy lanes,' replied the mantua-maker; 'I forgot the name of it, but every body knows Mr. Cordwain the packer.'

She then rose up, made one of her best curtsies, and hurried into a chair that was waiting for her; for this polite mantua-maker was above visiting her customers in a hackney coach: and this insolence was such a proof of her excellence in her business, that few ever scrupled to pay for it.

CHAP. V.

WHICH SHEWS HENRIETTA IN A NEW SITUATION.

HENRIETTA having summoned all her resolution, that she might acquit herself with propriety of the task she had undertaken, prepared the next day to wait upon Miss Cordwain. She remembered the mantua-maker's hint, and therefore avoided any studied simplicity in her dress; but no apparel, however mean, could have hid that noble air, or disguised that native elegance, so conspicuous throughout her whole person.

As soon as she was ready, she stepped into Mrs. Willis's parlour; and, while a coach was sent for, assumed a more than ordinary cheerfulness in her discourse with the good woman; for she was extremely desirous of concealing the emotions she felt upon this mortifying occasion; and affected a most heroick indifference, while inly she suffered all that a mind, delicate and sensible as her's, could feel.

Mrs. Willis followed her to the door with tears in her eyes. The young lady stepped into the coach, smiled a farewell, and ordered the coachman to drive to Mr. Cordwain's. A few minutes brought her to the house; and the servant, of whom she enquired if Miss Cordwain was at home, having shewn her into a parlour, bowed and withdrew.

Miss

Miss Cordwain being informed that a lady enquired for her, ordered her admittance; and the same servant returning, conducted Henrietta to her dressing-room.

Miss Cordwain, who was still lingering over her tea-table with a female acquaintance, rose up at Henrietta's graceful entrance, and, receiving her with a low curtsy, offered her an arm-chair at the upper end of the room.

Henrietta, conscious of the error she had committed in not making use of the mantua-maker's name before, blushed a little at this reception, which was not suitable to the character she was to appear in; and, declining the chair, 'Mrs. Cary, Madam,' said she. She could utter no more than those two words; but they were sufficient to give Miss Cordwain to understand her business.

The haughty citizen, excessively shocked to find she had been betrayed by the figure of Henrietta into so improper an instance of respect, and that the person she took for a lady of distinction was the young woman who had been recommended to her service; thought to recover the dignity which she conceived she had lost from this mistake, by assuming an imperious air and an insolent accent.

'Who did you live with last?' said she to Henrietta, throwing herself again into her chair, and glancing her over with a supercilious eye; 'I hope it was with a woman of quality: you will not do for me, I can tell you, if you have not been used to attend upon persons of rank.'

Henrietta, notwithstanding the confusion she was under at acting so strange a part, could not help being diverted with the pride of this daughter of trade.

'I am afraid, Madam,' said she, 'I shall not be worthy of your place; for I never lived in the service of any woman of quality, nor indeed of any other.'

'What, you are a gentlewoman, I suppose,' interrupted Miss Cordwain, drawing out the word *gentlewoman*; 'and now I remember Cary told me you had never been in service. Well, that does not signify: I have no objection to your having been a gentlewoman; you may be the better servant, for what I know. For, to say the truth,' said she, addressing herself to her companion, 'those sort of poor gentlewomen, when

they are reduced, as they call it, to wait upon us, who could buy their whole generation, often know their distance better, and are more humble, than such as have been bred to service.'

'Oh!' said the other lady, with an applauding smile, 'ever while you live, Madam, chuse a gentlewoman for your maid. There is Alderman Jennings the grocer's lady: I have heard her often declare she never was so well served as when Colonel Noble's daughter waited on her. The colonel was killed in the last war; and, as those folks you know have seldom any thing to leave their families, his fine gay daughters were obliged to go to service after his death, and did very well; but somebody left them ten thousand pounds a piece, and spoiled two excellent servants, by making them gentlewomen again.'

'Nay, if they had fortunes left them,' replied Miss Cordwain, 'why, you know, then, they had a right to be called gentlewomen.'

'Well, child,' pursued she, turning to Henrietta, 'as I told you before, I have no objection to your having been a gentlewoman; for I am resolved never to have any other to wait on me: I shall take you upon Cary's recommendation, and the sooner you come the better.'

Henrietta, who had really enjoyed the conversation that passed between these two ladies, told her that she would come whenever she pleased; and it being agreed she should come the following day, that she might dress her new lady for a city-feast, she curtsied profoundly low, and withdrew.

Henrietta, whose imagination was naturally lively, and not wholly free from those romantick notions which persons of her age readily admit, began to consider her transformation from the niece of Lady Meadows, and a presumptive heiress, into the waiting-maid of a cit, as one of those caprices of fate which never fail to produce surprising effects. She could not help fancying herself the future heroine of some affecting tale, whose life would be varied with surprising vicissitudes of fortune; and that she would at last be raised to a rank as much above her hopes, as the station she was now entering upon was below all that her fears had ever suggested.

But



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But these reflections were succeeded by others more reasonable, and which, indeed, afforded her a more solid satisfaction: she was going to refute the censures of an injurious world; to make that innocence, which had been so vilely traduced, manifest, in her chearful submission to poverty and servitude, at a time when a shining fortune was offered to purchase a change in her religious principles, and when perhaps a little dissimulation, or a temporary compliance with her aunt's proposals, might restore her to a rank in life suitable to her birth.

The satisfaction she felt from these pleasing ideas, diffused such a serenity over her fair face, as agreeably surprised Mrs. Willis, who had waited her return with impatience.

Henrietta repeated to her the dialogue that had passed between the two ladies with so much humour, and marked the pride of wealth, and aukward affectation of grandeur and distinction, in these opulent heiresses to the laborious gains of fordid thrift, and perhaps successful knavery, with such delicate strokes of satire, as convinced Mrs. Willis she would not be an injudicious observer of the manners of those whom it might be her lot to associate with, nor pass through this new scene of life without drawing improvement from it.

The good woman was grieved to find that she must lose her so soon; but, being fully persuaded that this humiliating step would terminate in something happy for her fair friend, she disposed herself to part with her chearfully.

It was agreed between them, that the elder Mr. Damer should not be made acquainted with any part of his son's behaviour with regard to Henrietta, till his return from Holland, when the whole affair might be laid candidly before him; and that the younger should be told, that she was gone into service; but where, he was not to be informed.

The next day Henrietta, after taking a tender farewell of Mrs. Willis, repaired to her new dwelling. Miss Cordwain was just gone out to make some little purchases for the evening; and Henrietta, being directed to go into her lady's dressing-room, was met by her predecessor, who had lingered in the house to have an opportunity of speaking to her, that, according to the general custom of

servants, she might prejudice her against her new mistress.

From this girl, who was not sparing in her invectives, she learned that Miss Cordwain's temper, which was not naturally good, was extremely soured of late by a disappointment in love; that the father, her father, had been treating with a certain nobleman for a match between her and the nobleman's eldest son; but that it had been broke off, because the citizen had refused to lay down more than thirty thousand pounds with his daughter, and the nobleman insisted upon forty.

This little piece of history was followed by a thousand other family anecdotes; to all which Henrietta listened in silence, and was not sorry that the censorious waiting-woman, whose tongue had, during a whole hour, run with surprising volubility, was at length silenced by the arrival of Miss Cordwain, whose voice when she heard on the stairs, she took a hasty leave, and retreated through a different door from that which the lady entered.

Miss Cordwain, as soon as she saw Henrietta, slightly inclined her head, in return to her respectful curtsy; and throwing some millinery trifles upon her toilet, sat down to her glass, and ordered her new woman to comb her hair, shewing a fretful impatience at her hair-dresser's long delay; for she was to meet her company at nine o'clock, and it was now almost four: so that she had good reason to fear she should hardly have time enough to dress.

While Henrietta was acquitting herself handily enough of this task, her lady took up a collection of songs that lay upon her table, that she might improve her mind while her body was adorning; and, after reading intently a few moments to herself, she hastily turned over the leaves to a place that was doubled down, and began to read aloud a most piteous complaint of a despairing nymph, whose lover had forsaken her for another: she concluded this doleful ditty with a deep sigh; and repeating the burden of it, *for men are as false as the changeable wind*, 'Henrietta,' said she, 'was you ever in love?'

Our fair heroine, who understood this question as a prelude to a confidence from her mistress, was at some loss how to answer it, when she was relieved from her

her perplexity by the arrival of Monsieur Finesse, the French hair-cutter.

Miss Cordwain, immediately dropping her tender languishments, assumed a supercilious air; and, after haughtily interrogating the ingenious artist for not coming sooner, submitted her tresses to his forming hands, a settled gloom all the time clouding her face: for, whether it was that her glass, on which her eyes were intently fixed, told her some unpleasing truths, or that her gentle bosom heaved with some secret discontent, it is certain that every thing displeased her; nor could all Henrietta's obliging attention to the adorning her person draw a smile of approbation from her.

After five hours labour, however, the lady was compleatly dressed. Her father, who had not seen her since dinner, which she had swallowed in haste, having so much business on her hands, now entered the room; and liking the showy appearance she made, 'Why, Molly,' said he, 'you are as fine as a dutchess.'

'As fine as a dutchess,' repeated she, pouting, 'and why not?'

'Very true, girl,' replied the father, 'thou hast that which can make dutchesses: but, Molly, I have something to say to thee in private; so send your waiting maid away.'

Henrietta immediately retired into her mistress's bed-chamber; which being only separated from the dressing-room by a slight partition of wainscot, she could not avoid hearing every thing that passed.

'I have had a proposal made me this afternoon,' resumed the father, 'and I came to acquaint you with it. Mr. Harris has asked you in marriage; there's immense riches for you, girl: what say you?'

'Sure, papa,' cried Miss Cordwain hastily, 'you have not given him any encouragement, have you? A fine match, indeed! so I must be called plain Mrs. Harris all my days, and there's Miss Jennings married to a viscount, and has coronets upon her coach: three weeks ago, Miss Collins, the broker's daughter, became a countess; and but this very morning I heard that the Duke of — is courting Miss Rogers, our neighbour the soap-boiler's niece, and she has but twenty thousand pounds. I can't bear it; so, I can't,' pursued Miss

Cordwain, bursting into tears, 'to see all my comrades at Hackney boarding-school married to right honourables, and I am not likely to be even a paltry baronet's wife.'

Here her tears and sobs suppressed any farther utterance, and had such an effect upon the fond father, that he also was ready to cry.

'Don't break my heart, Molly,' said he, half-sobbing; 'you know it is death to me to see you fret and grieve yourself: Are you not my only child? Is it not for you that I have been toiling and labouring for these forty years, up early and down late, scraping all I can together, gaining much and spending little, and all to make you a peeress of Great Britain; and a peeress you shall be: so don't cry, my girl, and spoil your complexion; neither neighbour Jennings, nor neighbour Collins's daughter, shall be greater than you. You shall be a countess, Molly, will that content you? I will lay down the odd ten thousand that the Earl of — and I quarrelled about, and you shall have his son.'

'I am obliged to you, papa,' said Miss Cordwain; 'but—'

'Nay,' interrupted the father, 'I find nothing will please you: you were crying just now, because you were not a countess; and when I tell you that I will part with another ten thousand pounds, to make you easy, you come with your buts.'

'Why, suppose I am a countess,' replied Miss Cordwain, 'will not Miss Collins be a dutchess, and take place of me? I can never endure that.'

'What signifies her taking place of you?' said her father, 'the duke's estate is not half so good as the Earl of —; besides, you refused a duke, you know, and you have often told me that you like Lord B—— better than any man in the world, and how have you pined since the match was broke off!'

'Well, I confess,' replied Miss, 'that I do like my Lord B——, and would rather marry him than any duke in the land, provided that little odious thing, Miss Collins, did not marry above me: she to be called her Grace at every word, while I am only Lady B——; I should die with vexation.'

'Since it is so,' said the father, 'I shall lay aside my design, and make no advances to the earl.'

'And then his son will marry somebody else,' cried Miss Cordwain.

'What would the girl be at?' interrupted the good man, with some heat; 'if you won't have him, need you care who has?'

Miss Cordwain now burst into a flood of tears: she liked Lord B——, but she could not bear the thoughts of Miss Collins being in a rank above her; and love and envy raised such tumults in her breast, as made her seek a relief in tears.

'I wish you knew your own mind, girl,' said the father, half angry, and half concerned at her grief.

'I know my own mind well enough,' replied Miss, sullenly: 'I would marry Lord B——, and I would not have that proud minx be a dutchess.'

'Take my word for it,' said the father, 'she will never be Dutchess of——; I know her fortune is not sufficient to clear the duke's estate of two mortgages that have almost swallowed it up.'

'Nay, then,' interrupted Miss Cordwain, who eagerly admitted an argument that set her mind at ease, 'I am sure the duke will not have her; for she is so ugly, you know, papa, that nothing could charm him but her riches.'

'Well,' said the father, smiling with pleasure to see her in good humour again, 'I am to meet a friend of the earl's to-night; shall this affair be brought on again?'

'As you please, papa,' said Miss Cordwain, curtsying; 'you know it is my duty to be obedient.'

'Aye,' said the good man, kissing her, 'you have always been one of the most dutiful children in the world; and I will make thee a lady, though I don't leave myself a shilling.' With this wise declaration he quitted the room, leaving his daughter in high spirits; who, after she had called her maid to adjust whatever might be amiss in her dress, and taken a full survey of herself in the glass, stepped into her coach, with the air of a citizen who has a fortune of forty thousand pounds.

CHAP. VI.

CONTAINS AN INCIDENT WHICH

THE SAGACIOUS READER HAS PROBABLY FORESEEN.

HENRIETTA, when she was left alone, found sufficient matter for reflection in the sentiments and behaviour of this wealthy tradesman and his daughter; and as it was now become necessary, for her own peace of mind, to reconcile herself to the situation that fortune had placed her in, she endeavoured to extract useful lessons from every scene that passed under her observation.

'Why have I lamented my poverty?' said she to herself; 'riches neither give understanding to the mind, nor elegance to the person. How mean is Miss Cordwain with forty thousand pounds! what narrow notions! what selfish passions! how ignorant! how contemptible!—All the advantages her large fortune procures her, is a title and a coronet: honours how despicable, when such as Miss Cordwain wear them!'

'Let me thank Heaven, then, that made my father a younger brother; that he inherited the virtues and elevated sentiments of his noble ancestors, and wanted that allurements to upstart wealth, which might have given me a Miss Cordwain for a mother, and have deprived me of those generous precepts, and those bright examples, by which I have been taught to think poverty a less evil than dishonour; and that a peaceful conscience is cheaply purchased with the loss of every worldly advantage.'

These were her reflections, as she afterwards declared, to her friend. It is not therefore surprising that, with such sentiments, our fair heroine found herself tranquil in her humble station, and dignified misfortune by her graceful resignation to it.

If the woman she served had had judgment enough to distinguish merit, and goodness enough to love it, Henrietta must have engaged her attention and her kindness: but little minds like nothing but what resembles themselves.

Miss Cordwain sometimes condescended to enter into a conversation with her woman, but was quickly disgusted with the difference of their notions; and what she could not comprehend, she either despised as folly, or suspected as artifice.

They were upon these terms when

Mr.

Mr.

Mr. Cordwain acquainted his daughter, that they were invited to spend a week at the Earl of —'s country-seat; for the contested ten thousand pounds being granted by the citizen, the treaty of marriage was renewed; and this visit was proposed in order to bring the young people together again with some kind of decorum.

Miss Cordwain, in high spirits, gave her woman notice to make preparations for this little journey; which done, Henrietta went to take leave of her faithful Mrs. Willis.

'What a triumph would mine be,' said she to her friend, 'if any of my relations should happen to be at this noblesman's seat, and behold me in the character of Miss Cordwain's servant!'

'You have done right, my dear,' replied Mrs. Willis, 'to call it a triumph; for so indeed it would be, the triumph of virtue over pride and prejudice.'

The good woman informed her, that her guardian was in a very ill state of health, and was gone to Montpellier, in consequence of his physician's advice: that the young man had been there to wait upon her; and that, when he heard of the resolution she had taken, he affected to think himself extremely injured by her conduct, as it shewed the utmost contempt of his advice and friendship: 'but it was easy to perceive,' added Mrs. Willis, 'that there was more grief than anger in the reproaches he threw out against you upon this occasion. He seemed much mortified at my refusing to tell him where you was, but owned that his wife made him very uneasy upon your account; and when I urged that as an argument against the propriety of your seeing him, his silence acknowledged me in the right.'

Henrietta was sensibly affected with the news of her guardian's illness; and, since his return was now uncertain, she resolved to write to him immediately, and give him an account of all that had happened to her since he went abroad, fearing that, unless she explained the reasons of her conduct, he might be prejudiced against her by her aunt's representations of it. She would not give him any disquiet, by mentioning his son's behaviour, but left that to be unravelled by time.

Mrs. Willis having promised to get this letter safely transmitted to Mr. Da-

mer, Henrietta took a tender leave of her, and returned home.

The next morning, very early, the coach and six was at the door. Miss Cordwain impatiently stepped in, for she thought every moment an age till she saw her noble lover again; her face dressed in smiles of pleasing expectation, and her heart exulting with the consciousness of her own worth, which, by her father's concession of the disputed thousands, had received such a considerable addition: but being, as before observed, not very happy in the frame of her temper, this sunshine of satisfaction was soon clouded at being obliged to wait a few minutes for her father, whose slowness but ill suited with her eager impatience.

Indeed the wary citizen, having wisely considered that they had a journey to perform of at least twenty miles, was busied in packing up some necessary refreshments, that they might not be furnished by the way. For this purpose, he had caused a neat's tongue, a cake of ginger-bread, two or three pounds of almonds and raisins, and a bottle of sack, to be provided; and he himself brought the basket in which they were deposited to the coach, directing Henrietta to get in first, that he might place it safely in her lap; which done, he took his seat next his daughter, and ordered the coachman to drive.

Miss Cordwain's ill humour insensibly wearing off, they pursued their journey with great satisfaction, not having baited above three or four times on the road.

At length the young lady's eyes were delighted with the prospect of the magnificent villa, which she expected one day to be mistress of; but her attention was soon called off that object by the presence of her lover, who, being just returned from a little excursion on horseback, alighted as soon as he saw the coach stop, and advanced to help his mistress out.

The young lord presented his hand to Miss Cordwain with an air of forced gallantry; but happening to glance his eyes towards Henrietta, he started back in great surprize.

Miss Cordwain, vexed at the attention with which he gazed upon her woman, jumped out of the coach, before he had sufficiently recovered himself to be able to offer her again the hand which, in his confusion, he had withdrawn.

The

The lady having on a capuchin, which she had wore during the journey, undressed it, and tossing it into the coach to Henrietta, bid her, in an imperious tone, take care of it.

This action and these words gave the young nobleman to understand that our beauteous heroine was actually the servant of Miss Cordwain: a circumstance which furnished him with new matter for wonder; and indeed this encounter gave him so much perplexity, and so entirely engrossed his thoughts, that the old tradesman (who enquired after my good lord and my good lady's health, with as many bows and scrapes as would have served any trader to express his acknowledgment to a customer whom he had just cheated) was obliged to repeat his questions several times before he could procure an answer.

As for Henrietta, she had, upon the first sight of this young nobleman, whom she immediately knew to be the same person that had lodged at Mrs. Eccles's, been under some confusion, lest he should accost her as an acquaintance before the lady on whom she attended; but observing that, from Miss Cordwain's behaviour, he understood her situation, and took no farther notice of her than by a side glance, which he gave her, full of passionate concern, she was relieved from her fears; and, far from being discomposed at the character she appeared in, she acquitted herself of the little duties of her station with the most graceful ease; gave her lady her fan, received her commands, and, with a little French trunk in her hand that contained some laces and linen, followed her to the house at a respectful distance.

Lord B——'s emotions at this unexpected meeting with Henrietta, having now in some degree subsided, he entertained his mistress as they walked with his usual vivacity and politeness; but could not help often turning to snatch a look at her fair attendant, whose charms in that humble station, a station so unworthy of her birth and shining merit, acquired a pathetick power that melted him to a tenderness he had never known before.

He conducted the lady and her father to the apartment of the countess his mother; and, taking the first opportunity to leave them, retired to his own, that he might be at liberty to reflect upon his adventure.

To know that the woman, whom all his most diligent enquiries for so many weeks could never discover, was in the same house with him, was a circumstance that afforded him infinite satisfaction; but he saw no probability of turning this circumstance to the advantage of his designs upon her. For, with what face could he plead his passion to one of her delicacy, while he was publicly addressing another?

The servile condition he saw her in was a bar to his hopes. She who, with such uncommon attractions, could resolve to be poor, must needs be incorruptible. What allurements could riches throw out for a woman who knew no other pride but the pride of virtue?

He could not hope to make an impression upon her heart by the disguise of honourable love. She must needs know the terms he was upon with Miss Cordwain; and was afraid that she already despised him for the meanness of such a choice.

It was indeed still in his power to throw such obstacles in the way of this match, as to defer, if not break it entirely, but he could not resolve to make such a sacrifice to love: he would have married Henrietta with half Miss Cordwain's fortune; and was amazed at the violence of his passion, when he considered the prodigious disproportion between twenty and forty thousand pounds. Yet most sincerely did he wish his generosity could have been put to this trial; and, in the violence of his grief at the apparent impossibility that this should ever happen, a thousand times did he curse the malevolence of fate, that united so many virtues and graces in one lovely woman, and denied her wealth; which, however, by his preference of Miss Cordwain, he tacitly acknowledged was worth them all.

A whole hour's labour of thought and reflection left Lord B—— in the same state of anxious doubt and solicitude he was in when he first entered upon this examination of his own heart; and all he could be certain of, in this confusion of ideas and opposing sentiments, was, that the unexpected sight of Miss Courteney had charmed him more than ever; and following the impulse of his passion, without knowing whither it would conduct him, or what it would terminate in, he anxiously lay in wait for some opportunity of speaking to her

in private, which he found when he least expected it.

CHAP. VII.

IN WHICH OUR HEROINE AGAIN AP-
PEARS VERY FOOLISH.

MEAN time our lovely heroine, who had been received by the countess's woman with prodigious ceremony, and had, during a whole hour, listened with smiling attention to all the impertinences she uttered, was at length relieved from the fatigue of such conversation, and, with a profusion of compliments, conducted to a chamber contiguous to that of her mistress. As soon as she was left alone, she began to consider how she should extricate herself from the difficulties her unexpected meeting with Lord B—— had involved her in.

Her delicacy was shocked at the thoughts of remaining in the house with a man who had made an attempt upon her honour, especially in the situation she now was; a situation that would seem to invite his future attacks: and, though he might well impute their meeting to the fantastick effects of chance, yet he would not fail to construe her stay into a tacit encouragement of that passion he had professed for her at parting, the dishonourable purport of which was evident from the engagements he had entered into with Miss Cordwain.

She reflected also on the censures under which her character laboured at present; and was justly apprehensive that, when this part of her story was known, the malicious world would not fail to insinuate that she threw herself into Lord B——'s way, and the inferences that would be drawn from such a supposed conduct must needs be highly disadvantageous to her.

But, on the other hand, how could she quit Miss Cordwain's service so abruptly, without giving occasion for strange conjectures, and setting the tongue of malice loose to assign reasons for her behaviour, very different from the truth?

However, the inconveniencies which might attend this step were light, compared with those she foresaw from exposing herself voluntarily to the pursuits of a young libertine, whose eyes, in this

last interview, had spoken too plainly to leave her in doubt of his sentiments.

She therefore resolved to go away the next day; and, as soon as she was summoned to the toilet, acquainted Miss Cordwain with her intention.

Henrietta was a scrupulous observer of truth, and would not on this occasion violate it, by forming any plausible excuse for her sudden determination; so that Miss Cordwain, in whose breast the stings of jealousy had been roused by the passionate glances Lord B—— had darted at her maid, began to entertain strange suspicions from so unexpected an overture; and, in a peremptory tone, demanded to know her reasons for quitting her service in such a manner.

Henrietta, with great sweetness, assured her that she did not desire to be dismissed in consequence of any discontent, but that the necessity of her affairs obliged her to return immediately to town.

'Your affairs!' said Miss Cordwain, with a haughty sneer; 'I vow it is mighty pretty to hear servants talk of their affairs, as if they really had any concerns of more consequence than the duty they owe their principals. I wonder you don't tell me you have half a dozen engagements in town,' pursued she, laughing aloud; 'such a speech would become you mightily: but pr'ythee, go, creature; pack up your rags in a sheet of brown paper, and take yourself away. I suppose you have found out a new method of living, less mortifying to your pride of beggarly gentility than waiting upon a woman of fortune; and I doubt not but you will be shortly seen flaunting it in publick places with a flimsy sack, a painted face, and all the trappings of your trade.'

To this coarse abuse Henrietta listened in silence, beholding her imperious mistress all the time with such a calm, but steady eye, as called up a blush in those cheeks which had been before overspread with a livid paleness.

Not that she felt any remorse for the reproaches she had uttered, or was ashamed of her indecent transports; but Henrietta's soft composure, the dignity of her silence, and the energetick expression in her eyes, struck a kind of awe into her mean-souled adversary; and, inly raging at the inferiority she was conscious

conscious of, she commanded her to be gone from her presence.

Henrietta instantly obeyed, and, meeting the countess's woman as she went out of the room, she begged her to send a servant to the nearest inn to hire a post-chaise for her, being resolved to return to London that very day.

This well-bred Abigail expressed great concern that she was so soon to lose the honour of her company; and asked, with an appearance of anxiety, if she was not to return again?

Henrietta replied in the negative: at which the other seemed wonderfully surprised, though she was not ignorant of all that had passed between Henrietta and her lady; for, hearing Miss Cordwain's voice very loud, she had applied her ear to the key-hole, and needed no farther information.

Our fair heroine having evaded the artful questions of this prying woman, and discouraged her reflections on her own lady, whom, in her general invective against the pride and caprice of mistresses, she did not spare, told her, she would have the pleasure of viewing the fine gardens that belonged to the house before she went away; and Mrs. Smith promised to join her, as soon as she had executed the commission she was charged with.

Henrietta accordingly repaired to the gardens, full of reflections upon the scene that had lately passed. She entered a little covered alley that led to a grotto, which she had an inclination to take a view of; when, hearing the sound of steps behind her, she looked back, supposing it was Mrs. Smith; but was not a little surprized to find it was Lord B——, who, seeing her cross the terrace from his chamber-window, had followed her thither.

Henrietta, rightly judging that this encounter was not merely accidental, turned her steps from the grotto, and struck into a less private walk. Lord B——, perceiving her intention, crossed immediately and met her, bowing profoundly low, and, with an air as respectful as if he was accosting a dutchess, enquired after her health.

Henrietta, not at all flattered by this instance of respect, which he by whom it was paid considered as an act of supererogation, and that it would affect her accordingly, returned his compliment

with the most graceful ease; and, smiling, told him, he must not now consider her as Miss Courteney, but the servant of Miss Cordwain.

'O that horrid appellation!' cried he: 'What violence did I not do myself to behave to you as I did this morning! But tell me, for Heaven's sake, Madam, what has occasioned this transformation?'

'My aunt's continued displeasure,' replied Henrietta. 'Your lordship has perhaps heard what circumstances my father died in: the station therefore in which you see me, ought not to be called a transformation; it is what I was born to, since I was born in indigence.'

'I cannot bear to hear you talk thus,' interrupted Lord B——; 'how could you think of subjecting yourself to a condition so unworthy of you, when you knew there was a man in the world that would have died to serve you!'

'I am not of a temper,' said Henrietta, 'to be easy under great obligations; and servitude is, in my opinion, less shocking than dependence.'

'Why do you talk of obligations,' said Lord B——: 'love knows no property; could you doubt that my fortune would be at your command? Suffer me, I conjure you,' pursued he, 'to snatch you from this unworthy situation; can riches be better employed than in supporting her I love?'

'My lord,' interrupted Henrietta, her face glowing with indignation, 'this is an insult I could not have expected from one of your rank and politeness: I am fallen very low indeed, when a man, who is upon the point of marriage with another, dares talk to me of love.'

'There are certain engagements,' replied Lord B——, a little confused at the air with which she uttered these words, 'in which the heart has no part.'

'Very likely,' interrupted Henrietta; 'but it is sufficient for me to know, that the engagements your lordship has entered into leave you not the liberty of addressing me in this manner: and I look upon the professions you make me as the highest insult upon my distress.'

Lord B——, notwithstanding he found in this justifiable haughtiness the ruin of his

his hopes, could not help admiring a mind so rightly turned; humble with such propriety, and proud only when condescension would be meanness.

'This is not a time,' said he, 'to tell you how far I am bound by those engagements you speak of; but, whatever they are, they ought not to deprive me of the happiness of doing you service.'

'I am obliged to you, my lord,' said Henrietta; 'but, at present, the greatest service you can do me is to take no notice of me.'

In speaking these words, she curtsied, and would have left him; but he, not able to part with her thus, snatched her hand.

'You must not leave me,' said he, 'till you promise to give me an opportunity of speaking to you more fully. Oh, how I love you!' cried he, gazing on her passionately.

'Again this insulting declaration!' interrupted Henrietta, pulling her hand from him, and giving him a look full of scorn and anger as she turned away.

'Hear me, Madam,' cried he, pursuing her: 'suffer me, in the character of your friend, to offer you my services. My mother was formerly acquainted with Lady Meadows: if it will be of any use to you, I will engage her to renew it, and offer her mediation betwixt your aunt and you. You must not, by Heaven you must not, continue longer in so shocking a situation!'

This proposal, and the earnest manner in which it was made, drew Henrietta's attention: angry as she was, she thought it merited a civil return.

'Doubt not, my lord,' said she, her charming eyes recovering their usual sweetness, 'that I should be glad to consider you in the character of a friend: and the offer you now make me is obliging, that I cannot dispense with myself from telling you my reasons for declining it.'

She then, in a few words, acquainted him with the purport of her aunt's letter to her: 'Such are the terms,' added she, 'upon which a reconciliation with my aunt can be only effected; therefore, the countess's interposition in my favour, were she disposed to grant it, would be of no use.'

Lord B——, having before fully informed himself of every thing relating

to Miss Courteney, no sooner heard that, for so trifling a compliance as the change of her religion, it was in her power to secure Lady Meadows's estate to herself, which he knew to be very considerable, than he thought fit to alter his style, and declared that the affair between Miss Cordwain and him was not carried so far as to take from him the liberty of following his inclinations, and of offering her his hand; he begged her therefore to favour him with another interview in the morning, when he would explain himself farther.

Henrietta perceiving the countess's woman approaching, and unwilling to leave him in doubt with regard to her sentiments upon this new proposal, thus answered hastily:

'My lord, this can never be; there are many obstacles against it; you will find it very difficult to surmount those your own family will throw in your way; but, suppose that could be done, my scruples will raise others less easy perhaps to be overcome.'

She left him when she had said these few words, and went to meet Mrs. Smith, who told her she had procured a vehicle for her, and that it would be at the back gate in less than an hour; 'but,' continued she, 'there is a strange confusion within; have you seen your lady?'

Henrietta told her she had not.

'God knows what is the matter,' said Mrs. Smith; 'she went into the garden to look for you, as I imagined, and returned a few minutes ago with a most wrathful countenance: her father and she confabulated together, and then went into my lord's dressing-room; and Mr. Jauvert, my lord's gentleman, told me that the old man seemed to be very uneasy.'

Henrietta had no time to make any reflections upon what she heard; for a servant that moment came to tell Mrs. Smith, that her lady had sent him to look for her, and desired that she would bring Miss Cordwain's woman to her apartment.

Henrietta, though a little surprized, followed Mrs. Smith with great cheerfulness, who desired her to wait in the anti-chamber while she went to acquaint her lady with her being there; where we will leave her for a few moments, till the reader is informed of the accident that occasioned this summons.

C H A P. VIII.

WHICH CONTAINS A CURIOUS DIA-
LOGUE BETWEEN THE EARL AND
THE CITIZEN.

MISS Cordwain, who, in the notice Lord B—— took of Henrietta, found matter sufficient for jealousy and uneasiness, entertained the most injurious suspicions, when she heard her woman's sudden resolution to return to London; and having driven her from her presence with a torrent of abusive language, vented her rage in tears as soon as she was gone.

She reproached herself with her folly, in dismissing her so readily; when, by obliging her to stay, she might have guessed her designs, or perhaps have obtained a more certain knowledge of them.

Her mischievous imagination, being now upon the stretch to find some expedient for protracting her departure, at last presented her with one, which she resolved to make use of.

She hid a diamond bracelet; and then rung her bell for Henrietta, with an intention to tell her that she could not find it, and insist upon her producing it before she left the earl's.

Mrs. Smith, who was that moment passing by her apartment, and knew that Henrietta was not in the way, stepped in, to know what she wanted. Miss Cordwain asked for her maid; and being told that she was walking in the garden, hastened thither immediately, not more delighted with the opportunity she now had of putting a stop to her journey, than of affronting her with the suspicion of theft.

As she descended the terrace, her eyes were blasted with the sight of her maid at a distance in earnest discourse with her lover.

At this confirmation of her suspicions, she ran back like a fury into the house; and meeting her father, who had just left the earl in his dressing-room, told him, that they were invited only to be affronted; that Henrietta was Lord B——'s mistress; that he had taken her out of her service; and that she was going back to London that very night, at his request.

The old man, without staying to enquire farther, or reflecting upon the extreme improbability of this story, swore that never a lord in the land should use

his daughter ill; and strode back to the earl's apartment, while Miss Cordwain retired to her own, meditating vengeance on those that had so cruelly injured her.

Mr. Cordwain, who had promised himself to speak to the earl in very high terms, was no sooner in his presence, than he sunk into that littleness which mere monied men are so conscious of with persons of birth and politeness. However, he assumed courage enough to tell his lordship, that he had something to say to him in private.

The earl, observing that his features were ruffled, was a little surprized; but dismissed his gentleman immediately, though he was not quite dressed; and then, with a complaisant smile, desired the citizen to let him know his commands.

'I am a plain man, my lord,' said Mr. Cordwain; 'I don't understand fine compliments and breeding, though I don't want for manners neither; and I am sure I have always been very civil to your lordship; and I did not expect that your lordship would have invited my girl and I here to scoff at us. My lord, I can give my girl forty thousand pounds, which is what few lords can say, let me tell you that; and withal I am an honest man, though I have forty thousand pounds more in my pocket, perhaps: but no matter for that, I am not proud of my riches.'

'Mr. Cordwain,' said his lordship, wondering to what this eloquent harangue tended, 'I hope nothing has happened to give you any disgust? Upon my honour, I have the highest esteem for you, and I think I give a proof of it by being so desirous of your alliance; but I am at a loss to comprehend your meaning, when you talk of my having invited you and your daughter here to affront you. Miss Cordwain is a most accomplished young lady, and my son has too much judgment not to be as sensible as he ought of her merits.'

'Indeed,' interrupted Mr. Cordwain, 'my daughter is in my eye a very comely young woman; and I will never give her to any man, though he were a duke or a prince, that would keep a mistress under her nose, as one may say.'

'You astonish me, Mr. Cordwain,' replied his lordship: 'have you any reason to suspect that my son is a libertine?'

'My

‘My lord,’ returned Mr. Cordwain, ‘I am no scholar, I don’t understand hard words; I have had learning enough to scrape a few thousands together, and that is sufficient for me. Your lordship’s son may be a libertine for what I can tell; that’s neither here nor there; but I am sure he is a terrible rake: and what tender father,’ pursued he, almost in tears, ‘would marry his child to a rake, to have all the fruits of his toil and labour, for thirty years and upwards, squandered away upon lewd women?’

‘Sure, Mr. Cordwain,’ interrupted his lordship, with a sterner accent, ‘you do not imagine my son capable of acting so dishonourably! His principles, Mr. Cordwain—’

‘Nay, nay, my lord,’ resumed the citizen, ‘I have nothing to say against his principles: he is no Jacobite, I dare engage; but he is a rake, my lord, that is my objection to him, and rakes are very bad husbands.’

‘My son,’ said the peer, ‘may have had some youthful follies; but I am sure Miss Cordwain’s beauty and good sense will fix his heart.’

‘And does your lordship really think my girl a beauty?’ said the fond father, his eyes glistening with pleasure. ‘Indeed I always thought so; but fathers, my lord, are apt to be partial.’

‘She is both beautiful and witty,’ replied his lordship, who found every excellence in fifty thousand pounds.

‘Nay, as for her wit,’ said Mr. Cordwain, ‘I am the best judge of that, who have seen her growing up under my eye. She took her learning surprisingly, my lord; and, by the time she was ten years old, she had read her Psalter quite through. Would it not grieve one, then,’ continued he, ‘to part with such a girl as this to one that will slight her, and keep mistresses?’

‘Do me the favour, Mr. Cordwain,’ said his lordship, ‘to acquaint me with your reasons for suspecting that my son will keep a mistress, though he should be so happy as to have Miss Cordwain for a wife?’

‘Why, you must know, my lord,’ replied the citizen, looking extremely wise, ‘that I have made a discovery; and your son is actually carrying on an intrigue with my daughter’s maid.’

‘Sure this must be some mistake,’ cried the peer.

‘No, no, my lord,’ answered Cordwain, ‘it is no mistake, I am very sure of it.’

‘And you have discovered this intrigue, you say,’ resumed his lordship; ‘pray, when, and by what means, did you discover it?’

‘About half an hour ago,’ replied Mr. Cordwain; ‘my daughter told me of it.’

‘Oh! then it was your daughter that discovered it,’ said his lordship, smiling a little at the old man’s absurdity.

‘Ay, ay, my lord,’ cried he, construing that smile into an acknowledgment of his daughter’s sagacity; ‘I told your lordship she did not want for wit.’

‘But Miss Cordwain is certainly mistaken now,’ said the peer; ‘this is some pretty frowardness, a love-quarrel; depend upon it we shall find it so; however, I will talk to my son, and I’ll engage the countess to discourse your daughter upon this matter. Come, Mr. Cordwain, we who are the parents of these young people know their true interest better than they do, and must endeavour to make up this little breach between them. I will make an end of dressing,’ pursued his lordship, bowing low to the cit, ‘and join you in the garden a quarter of an hour hence, when I hope to clear up this affair to your satisfaction.’

Mr. Cordwain immediately withdrew; and the peer having stepped to his lady’s apartment, to acquaint her with this strange story, left it to her to manage Miss Cordwain, and went in quest of his son, who, when Henrietta left him, had retired to his study, and was revolving in his mind a scheme which, by reconciling his interest to his love, would gratify all his wishes.

CHAP. IX.

IN WHICH HENRIETTA HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH THE COUNTESS.

THE countess, like a discreet matron, was resolved to see the young woman of whom Miss Cordwain entertained a jealousy, that she might, by wholesome counsels, fortify her against seduction; for she supposed that this suspicion took its rise from the girl’s being pretty, and, perhaps, some little unmeaning

meaning gallantry of her son's, who, like all other young men, admired beauty wherever he found it.

She was willing also to know certainly whether Miss Cordwain's fears were only imaginary, that she might the better effect a reconciliation between the lovers; for she passionately desired the completion of a match that would put her son into possession of forty thousand pounds.

When Mrs. Smith appeared, in consequence of her summons; and told her that Mrs. Henrietta waited her ladyship's commands, the countess asked her what sort of a young woman she was?

Mrs. Smith replied, that she was an awkward sort of a body, mightily conceited of her beauty, she believed: 'and Heaven knows,' added she, 'she has not much to boast of.'

'Well, tell her to come in,' said the countess, beginning to believe, from this account of her, that Miss Cordwain's fears were not without foundation; for vanity, she well knew, was the great underminer of chastity, from the dutchess down to the chambermaid.

When Henrietta entered the room, the countess, who expected to see a very different person, was so struck with her beauty and the dignity of her air, that she rose from her seat, and returned the graceful curtsy she made her with a complaisance that surprised her own woman, who, being ordered by her lady to leave the room, instantly obeyed, but went no farther than the door, where she stood listening, and heard all that passed.

'You appear to me,' said the countess to Henrietta, with an engaging smile, 'to deserve so little the suspicions that are entertained of you, that I really know not how to mention them to you, though it was for that purpose I sent for you hither.'

Henrietta was a little surprised at this beginning; but, conscious of the integrity of all her actions, she was wholly free from any apprehensions that could discompose her.

'I know not, Madam,' said she, 'the nature of those suspicions which I have incurred, but I am very sure I have no guilt to reproach myself with, which should make me fear to stand the strictest scrutiny.'

'Upon my word, I believe you,' said the countess, charmed with the noble confidence of her answer, and the graceful manner in which it was delivered;

'and it must be my son's imprudence that has given occasion for Mr. Cordwain's suspicions.'

The countess was too delicate to make use of Miss Cordwain's name upon this occasion; but Henrietta in an instant comprehended the whole mystery, and was now able to account for the injurious language she had given her.

'Own freely to me,' pursued the countess, smiling, 'has not my son been a little troublesome to you, and talked to you of love, and such idle stuff?'

'It is some mortification to me, Madam,' replied Henrietta, blushing, 'to own that I have been affronted in the manner your ladyship mentions: however, it is certainly true, Lord B—— has thought me weak enough to be dazzled with his professions.'

'Then you have seen my son often,' said the countess.

Henrietta, who thought it behoved her to be very explicit on this occasion, related to the countess the manner of her becoming acquainted with Lord B——, his concealing himself in her chamber, and his behaviour afterwards.

'I did not know his lordship's name,' pursued she; 'and though I often heard him mentioned at Mr. Cordwain's, yet, as I had no reason to suspect that he was the same young nobleman, whom I had such reason to avoid, I made no scruple to attend Miss Cordwain hither.'

'I am very much concerned,' said the countess, 'to hear this account of my son: it was a very shocking attempt. So you have acquainted your mistress with what happened?'

'No, Madam,' answered Henrietta; 'that was not necessary: but when I discovered that Lord B—— was the person who had treated me so freely, I desired Miss Cordwain to dismiss me, because I did not chuse to throw myself in his way.'

'That was very prudently resolved,' said the countess: 'and when are you to leave Miss Cordwain?'

'Immediately, Madam,' replied Henrietta: 'I have provided myself with a post-chaise to return to London, and I believe it is now waiting for me.'

'Certainly,' said the countess, after a little pause, 'this sudden resolution of yours must surprise Miss Cordwain! What did she say when you acquainted her with it?'

'She was extremely angry, Madam,' replied Henrietta, 'and said many severe things to me, at which I was then astonished; but if Miss Cordwain entertained any unfavourable suspicions of me, her behaviour may be accounted for.'

'Since you have not acquainted her,' said the countess, 'with my son's rude attempt upon you, what reason could she have to suspect you?'

'I know of none, Madam,' answered Henrietta, 'except his lordship's speaking to me in the garden a little time ago, may have come to her knowledge.'

'You have shewn so much candour in your answers to my questions,' resumed the countess, 'that I am persuaded you will tell me frankly the subject of my son's discourse to you in the garden.'

'I was born to suffer indignities,' Madam, said Henrietta, her cheeks glowing with indignation: 'My Lord B——, though he must know that I was not ignorant of his honourable passion for Miss Cordwain, yet dared to affront me with the mention of his love.'

The countess was a little surprized at this sally, which escaped Henrietta in the warmth of her resentment, when she called to her remembrance a declaration, which she looked on as the highest insult, since Lord B—— was acquainted with her birth. Had the countess known that it was the grand-daughter of the Earl of ——, who expressed herself in such lofty terms, she would have admired that becoming pride which suggested them; but, in the waiting-maid of Miss Cordwain, it appeared absurd and ridiculous, and she was ready to suspect her of artifice and dissimulation.

But when she cast her eyes upon Henrietta, and saw the emotion with which she was agitated, the deep blush that glowed on her cheeks, and the tears that trembled in her eyes, she reproached herself with the injustice she was guilty of, in so soon admitting doubts of her innocence.

Henrietta supposing, from the silence of the countess, that she had no more to say to her, curtsied to her respectfully, and was about to withdraw.

'You must not go,' said that lady in an obliging accent, 'till I know whether it is in my power to serve you. You have thrown up Miss Cordwain's

service upon my son's account, it is but just therefore that I should procure you another; if you are not provided for, I will recommend you to my sister, who will either take you herself, or settle you with another lady.'

The countess, in making this offer, had another view besides serving Henrietta. She was not willing to lose sight of her, for she rightly judged that, with so many charms in her person, and an understanding far above what was generally found in persons of her rank, this young woman was very likely to inspire a solid passion; and she dreaded lest her son should be so far captivated by her as to neglect the advantageous match that was now offered him.

If she placed her with her sister, or with any of her friends, it would not be easy, she thought, for her son to get access to her; or, if he resolved to continue his pursuit, his designs, whatever they were, would be known soon enough to be prevented.

Henrietta penetrated no farther into the countess's sentiments, than what served to give her a high idea of her benevolence. She accepted her offer with expressions of the deepest gratitude; and this the lady considering as a proof of her sincerity and right intentions, she, in the billet which she gave her for her sister, recommended her in very obliging terms to her favour.

Henrietta again politely thanked her, and, receiving the billet, upon which there was a full direction, she went out of the countess's chamber, with an intention to depart immediately.

Mrs. Smith, whom she found in the anti-chamber, informed her, that her chaise was waiting for her at the gate; upon which Henrietta took leave of her, and descended the back-stairs, but was suddenly stopped by Mr. Cordwain, who had followed her, and, seizing her rudely by the arm, charged her with having robbed his daughter.

CHAP. X.

CONTAINS A DISCOVERY WHICH IT IS HOPED THE READER WILL NOT BE DISPLEASED WITH.

'GOOD Heaven!' exclaimed Henrietta, in the utmost astonishment, 'what can this mean?'

Look

‘Look you, child,’ said the citizen, ‘my daughter tells me you have stole her diamond bracelet: any body but myself would send you to prison directly; but I am tender-hearted, and consider, that though I could hang you for this robbery, yet that would be poor satisfaction for such a loss: therefore, in compassion, I will spare your life, provided you immediately restore the bracelet.’

Henrietta had by this time collected her scattered spirits, and comprehended the motive of this malicious accusation.

‘May I not see Miss Cordwain, Sir?’ said she, in a composed accent; ‘I am pretty sure that I can convince her she wrongs me greatly by this strange suspicion.’

‘See her! what should you see her for?’ replied the old man, ‘unless you will give me back the bracelet: you must not think to move her with your whining; her intreaties shall not save you if you are obstinate; so look to it. But come, perhaps you will have the grace to repent, and return the bracelet; come along.’

Saying this, he pulled her up stairs, and led her, with no great complaisance, into his daughter’s chamber, who sat exulting in her successful mischief, and the disgrace she had fixed upon the creature that presumed to rival her: a blush, however, dyed her cheeks at the sight of Henrietta, who, with a look that at once expressed the highest contempt of her mean accuser, and calm confidence in her own untainted innocence, asked her how she had so far offended her as to make her seek her life?

‘Offended me, creature!’ said Miss Cordwain, ‘have you the assurance to imagine that I am uneasy because—because—You vain, saucy flirt—who told you that I could be jealous of you? and so you suppose—but you shall produce my bracelet.’

‘Aye, that she shall,’ cried the citizen; ‘I wish we were in town, I would carry her before Alderman Grey-goose immediately.—Come, girl, don’t be a fool, but deliver up the bracelet, for this is a hanging matter, let me tell you.’

‘Do you really intend, Madam,’ said Henrietta, looking on Miss Cordwain with a most contemptuous smile, ‘to go through with this malicious accusation?’

‘and are you resolved to perjure yourself, and swear that I have got your bracelet?’

‘What does the creature mean!’ interrupted Miss Cordwain, colouring.

‘My meaning is,’ said Henrietta, ‘that your bracelet is certainly in your own possession; and that you pretend to have lost it only to fix a scandal upon me.’

‘O my God!’ cried Miss Cordwain, putting her hand to her head: ‘the excessive insolence of this wench affects me so, I believe I shall faint.—Dear papa, let her go about her business, I had rather lose ten bracelets than suffer so much uneasiness. Dear Sir, let her go, one time or other she will meet with her deserts. She will not stop at this theft, but somebody else may bring her to justice; I will have nothing more to do with her.’

‘Base woman!’ cried Henrietta, almost choked with rage. ‘No, I will not take the liberty you offer me: have our laws, think you, no punishment for a calumny like this, that strikes at life as well as reputation? You shall be forced to prove your charge, and my fame shall be cleared to your everlasting confusion.’

Miss Cordwain, conscious of her guilt, and apprehensive of the consequences of what she had done, knew not what answer to make to this menace. As for the citizen, he stared with stupid wonder upon the injured fair one: for the extraordinary emotion she was in, gave such vehemence to her utterance, and such fire to her eyes, that he even trembled, as if in the presence of some superior being. But poor Henrietta, after this sudden fall of rage, found her heart so oppressed with the indignity she had suffered, that she burst into a violent passion of tears.

Miss Cordwain was ready to renew her insults, when she found her so mortified; and her father being recovered from his panick, again urged her to restore the bracelet; when a servant came in, and informed them, that dinner was going to be served, and that his lord and lady expected them in the dining-room.

Miss Cordwain immediately obeyed the summons, for she dreaded the conclusion of this affair. When she entered the room, the countess, who knew nothing of what had happened, seeing her

look very pale, asked her if she was well? and Lord B——, who had promised his father to cure her jealousy by redoubled assiduity for the future, approached, and, with a well counterfeited tenderness, expressed his concern for her indisposition.

Miss Cordwain, who had been assured by her father that the earl earnestly desired the match between his son and her should go forward, resolved not to protract it by any shew of resentment at what was past, and therefore received his little assiduities with all the complaisance she was mistress of; but, desirous of mortifying him in the person of her who had so greatly attracted his notice, as well as to give him an opinion of the softness of her disposition, she told him, that indeed she was prodigiously discomposed; that her maid had robbed her; 'and my father,' added she, 'threatens the poor wretch with a prosecution, and I was weak enough to be excessively shocked with her blubbing.'

'Has your maid robbed you, Miss?' said the countess, extremely surprized.

'She has stolen a diamond bracelet from me this very morning, Madam,' replied Miss Cordwain.

'Impossible!' cried Lord B——, in a transport that deprived him of all consideration; 'Miss Courteney could not be guilty of any thing mean or scandalous.'

These words were scarce uttered, when he discovered and repented of his indiscretion; but it was now too late to repair it.

'Miss Courteney!' repeated Miss Cordwain, recovering from her surprize; 'who is Miss Courteney, my lord?'

The countess, perceiving her son was embarrassed, endeavoured to relieve him, by asking Miss Cordwain some questions concerning her loss; but that young lady would not be diverted from her question.

'This creature has a variety of names, I suppose,' said she: 'she hired herself to me by the name of Benson, and Courteney it seems is that she has been formerly known by. Sure I have been very unfortunate to get such a wretch to attend me!'

'Madam,' said Lord B——, again thrown off his guard by his indignation at hearing a woman of Henrietta's merit

so grossly abused, 'you don't know who you are speaking of.'

'Why, do you know?' said the earl to his son, in an accent that shewed how extremely he was displeased with his imprudence.

'Yes, my lord,' replied he, 'I do; and, Madam,' pursued he, addressing himself to Miss Cordwain, 'I am sure you will have candour enough to excuse my engaging with some warmth in the defence of the unfortunate young lady, who is now your servant, when you shall know that she is the niece of the Earl of ——, and that it is her firm attachment to the religion she was brought up in, which hinders her from succeeding to a very large estate, and makes it necessary for her to go to service for a subsistence.'

This account brought tears into the eyes of the countess, who only applauded herself for her discernment in the favourable sentiments she had conceived for Henrietta before she knew who she was.

The earl appeared moved, and was beginning to ask his son some questions concerning this fair unfortunate, when Miss Cordwain fetched a deep sigh, and fell back in her chair.

Rage at this discovery of her rival's birth and extraordinary merit, and terror, lest the scandalous accusation she had forged against her should end in her own disgrace, operated so powerfully upon her spirits, that she fainted away.

While the countess supported her, Lord B—— rang the bell very deliberately for assistance; and the earl, not much concerned at an accident which he imputed to a jealousy that proved her passion for his son, took that opportunity to remind him that it was his interest to improve the affection this young woman had for him.

The countess, who had in vain searched her pockets for a smelling-bottle, ordered a servant, who appeared at the summons of the bell, to bring one off her toilet; when Mr. Cordwain entered the room, and, seeing his daughter in that condition, made but one step from the door to the place where she sat, exclaiming, 'Oh! my child, what ails my child? is she dead?'

'Don't be alarmed,' said the countess, 'it is only a fainting fit, she will recover presently.'

Lord

Lord B——, who was ashamed to appear wholly inactive upon this occasion before his designed father-in-law, had presence of mind enough to take a decanter of water from the side-board, and sprinkle some of it on Miss Cordwain's face.

This remedy was applied so successfully, that she immediately opened her eyes, but the first object they met had like to have closed them again; for her father, hearing a smelling-bottle called for, remembered that she always carried one or two about her, and, searching her pockets with trembling haste, pulled out, with a smelling-bottle, the bracelet which she had concealed there, as in a place where it was likely to be most secure, being subject to no search but her own.

The old man made none of those reflections upon this accident which were obvious enough to every one else; but, perceiving his daughter was beginning to recover, presented the bracelet, instead of the smelling-bottle, to her, conceiving the former to be the best restorative.

'See, child!' cried he, in a transport, 'I have found your bracelet. Come, you must be well now—I don't wonder you was grieved: truly it would have been a great loss.'

Miss Cordwain flattered herself, from the words *I have found your bracelet*, that her father had wit enough to save her from any reproach, by giving some favourable turn to the discovery; but in this she greatly over-rated his abilities.

'And where dost think I found it, child?' pursued the old man; 'even in thy own pocket, as all the company can witness.'

'Very true,' said Lord B——, maliciously.

'Was it found in my pocket?' said Miss Cordwain. 'Why, then, to be sure, I pulled it off with my glove this morning, and forgot it: I protest I am sorry there has been so much noise made about it.'

'It is a pity indeed,' said the countess, 'considering who the person is that was supposed to have stolen it.'

'O la! papa,' cried Miss Cordwain, 'you don't know that my maid Henrietta is discovered to be a great lady.'

'Upon my word it is true,' pursued she, seeing him look surprized.

'I am sorry to hear that,' said the citizen, rubbing his forehead; 'for if she has friends, who will support her, she may commence a suit against me for *Scandalum Magnatum*, and what a power of money may I lose! See what comes of your heedlessness, girl. I protest I don't know what to do.'

The countess, though she was vexed at the vulgar sarcasm of the daughter, was nevertheless desirous of freeing the old man from his uneasiness, as well as to have an excuse for visiting the injured young lady.

'I am persuaded,' said she, 'that Miss Courteney's delicacy will prevent her from seeking any publick reparation for the affront she has suffered; but I will see her myself, and, if necessary, dissuade her from taking any resolution to your prejudice.'

Lord B——, who was talking to his father at a distant window, hearing this proposal, approached, and, by a look which he gave the countess his mother, seemed to bespeak her utmost tenderness and complaisance to the afflicted fair one.

Mr. Cordwain thanked her heartily for her kindness. 'But, odso! my lady,' cried he, stopping her as she was going out, 'I beg your ladyship's pardon, you must take the key up with you,' continued he, fumbling in his pockets, and at last pulling it out; 'for, when I came down, I locked the door for fear the bird should fly away.' With these words, he gave the countess the key, smiling and nodding his head in applause of his own sagacity.

The countess was extremely shocked to hear of this new indignity which the poor young lady had suffered, but she dissembled her concern, and silently withdrew.

Lord B—— again stole to a window to hide his emotions; and the earl, though greatly disgusted with the behaviour of both father and daughter, yet approached them with a complaisant air, and congratulated the latter on the recovery of her jewel.

Thus did these noble persons accommodate themselves to the manners of those whom they in secret despised; and, for the sake of a few paltry thousands, shewed the utmost solicitude to associate plebeian meanness in the honours of a noble ancestry, and to give title, rank, precedence,

precedence, to one who would disgrace them all.

CHAP. XI.

HENRIETTA RETURNS TO LONDON.

THE countess, who was greatly affected with the cruel usage Henrietta had received, could with difficulty restrain her tears when she entered the room where the fair prisoner was confined: that air of distinction which she had observed in her before she knew her birth, seemed now more remarkable, and made the humiliating condition to which she was reduced a subject of painful reflection to Lady —, who approached her with a look of tenderness and pity, and, taking her hand,

‘I scarce know how to speak to you,’ said she, ‘about an affair that Miss Cordwain has much more reason to be ashamed of than you. She has found her bracelet.’

Henrietta was a little surprised at the kind and familiar manner in which the countess accosted her; but still preserving that distant respect, which was due from the character she had assumed to a lady of her rank, she curtsied profoundly low, and thanked her for the honour she did her in condescending to bring this grateful piece of news herself.

‘I must tell you also,’ said the countess, ‘that I am not ignorant of your name and family, nor of your motives for submitting to go to service; for which you deserve to be esteemed and admired by all the world. It was my son that betrayed your secret,’ pursued the lady, observing that Henrietta looked surprised: ‘I will not ask you now how you came to intrust him with it; some other time you shall, if you please, tell me all your story. I have now only leisure to assure you, that I am your sincere friend, and that I will serve you with all the interest I have in any way you shall desire.’

Henrietta, after making a proper acknowledgment for this kind declaration, told the countess, that being determined to continue the way of life she had entered into, till her relations of themselves thought proper to alter it, the recommendation her ladyship had given her to her sister was the greatest service she

could possibly desire, and would be ever most gratefully remembered.

‘I admire your resolution; Miss Courteney,’ said the countess; ‘but I am grieved to think you should be in a situation so unworthy of you; something must be done to extricate you from it.’

‘I beg, Madam,’ said Henrietta, ‘that your ladyship’s kind concern for me may not lead you to take any steps in my favour with my relations. No,’ pursued she, with some warmth, ‘their unnatural behaviour to me deserves the neglect I shew them, in not soliciting their assistance. I have already got over all those little passions and prejudices which might hinder me from being easy with my humble lot; and I freely confess to you, Madam, that I find a secret pleasure in the thoughts of mortifying the pride of my Lord —, when some accident (for some accident it must be) shall shew him his niece in the quality of a servant.’

‘Consent at least,’ said the countess, ‘to my acquainting my sister with your birth, that she may endeavour to place you in such a manner as will be most agreeable to you.’

‘I do not wish, Madam, to be known to the person I serve,’ replied Henrietta; ‘and I desire to have no other consideration shewn me than what my behaviour in the station I am placed in shall merit.’

‘Well,’ said the countess, ‘it shall be as you would have it; but I cannot express to you how much I esteem and admire you. You may judge of my good opinion of you, Miss, when I tell you, that as to what regards my son’s passion for you, I depend entirely upon your candour and generosity. You know our views for him; and this is all I shall say.’

‘I am obliged to you, Madam,’ said Henrietta, ‘for the confidence you repose in me; I will endeavour to deserve it. And now, Madam,’ pursued she, smiling, ‘since my imprisonment is at an end, I will, with your ladyship’s permission, set out immediately for London; the chaise I had hired is, I suppose, still waiting for me. I hope to have the honour of presenting your letter to Lady D — to-morrow, or next day at farthest.’

‘Take my kindest wishes along with you,’

'you,' said the countess, kissing her; and taking a diamond ring from her finger, 'wear this for my sake,' said she, giving it to Henrietta; 'the intrinsic value of it is but small, but I hope you will wear it in remembrance of me.'

The countess went out of the room as soon as she had spoken these words, leaving Henrietta extremely affected with her kindness; and all obstacles to her journey being now removed, she hastened to the gate, placed herself in her post-chaise, which she found waiting, and in a few moments was out of sight.

Mean time, the countess returned to her company, and told Mr. Cordwain, smiling, that he had nothing to fear from Henrietta's vindictive resolutions. Upon which Miss Cordwain said, she would go up to her, and make her an apology for what had happened; but dinner was that moment served, which made it not necessary for the countess to tell her that Henrietta was gone, in order to prevent her intended civility: but, as soon as a proper opportunity offered, she took care to let the young lady know, that her suspicions of Henrietta were very ill-grounded; that she was perfectly virtuous; and likely to remain in the obscure condition of a servant, unless her relations, who were persons of rank and fortune, thought proper to do something for her.

She added, in order to remove all her uneasiness, that she had recommended her to a lady who would procure her a place, which was the least she could do for a young woman of her birth, in such unhappy circumstances.

Miss Cordwain was very well satisfied with what the countess had done; being persuaded that, since she was so desirous the treaty between Lord B—— and her should go forward, that she would take care to hinder any thing from happening on the part of Henrietta, that might give her cause for disgust.

But poor Lord B—— was in a truly pitiable situation: he was in love with the person of Henrietta, and the fortune of Miss Cordwain; and these different passions by turns equally possessed him, so that it was impossible for him to form any fixed resolution.

When he reflected on the solid advantages that would accrue to him from a marriage with the packer's daughter,

such as being enabled to play as high at Arthur's as my Lord —, to bring as many race-horses to Newmarket as —, to have as splendid equipages as the Earl of —, and several others, which make the envy and emulation of many of our present race of nobles, he was ready to sacrifice his inclinations to motives so just, so reasonable, so meritorious.

But when the image of Henrietta rose to his thoughts; her person so lovely, her manners so elegant, her birth not beneath his own, her virtue so eminent; how could he think of putting such a treasure out of his reach, by marrying her despicable rival! And indeed, so just were his notions of this treasure, and so high his value of it, that, provided any method could be found to reconcile her to her aunt, and secure to her the succession of her estate, he would willingly have renounced his pretensions to Miss Cordwain, and have married Henrietta; though her fortune, as heiress of Lady Meadows's estate, would be some thousands less than Miss Cordwain's.

Such a proof of disinterestedness, he thought, must needs be very grateful to a young woman of Henrietta's fine understanding and enlarged sentiments; and, having brought himself to this point, his next care was to procure a private interview with her, that he might acquaint her with his designs, and engage her concurrence with them.

But this scheme being defeated by her sudden departure, which he learned from his mother, he was plunged into new perplexity and uneasiness. He asked the countess, with an air of indifference and unconcern, where she was gone, and how she intended to dispose of herself? But that discerning lady, who observed his sudden emotion at the news of Henrietta's departure, would give him no other satisfaction than telling him, that she supposed she would again go to service; for she seemed to have no expectations of any favour from her relations.

Lord B——, after a little reflection, comforted himself with a hope, that some accident or other would again throw her in his way; and that the disgust she must necessarily entertain to a way of life so unworthy of her, would induce her to embrace his honourable proposals; for such he conceived them to be, since all the sacrifice he should expect from her,

was

was a temporary compliance with her aunt's inclinations with regard to religion: but, however, he thought it would be prudent not to break off with Miss Cordwain, because in her fortune he would always find wherewithal to comfort himself, if he was disappointed in his love.

In pursuance of this wise resolution, he behaved in such a manner to the citizen's daughter, as gave her no cause to be displeased with him; so that every thing in this noble family, and their designed allies, was upon the same footing as before Henrietta, with mischief-making beauty, came in the way.

HEN.



H E N R I E T T A.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAP. I.

Atheists have been but rare, since Nature's birth;

Till now she-atheists ne'er appear'd on earth.
Ye men of deep researches, say, whence springs
This daring character in timorous things!
Who start at feathers, from an insect fly,
A match for nothing—but the Deity.

YOUNG'S UNIVERSAL PASSION.



MEAN time our fair heroine, having performed her little journey without any unfortunate accident, arrived late in the evening at the house of her friend Mrs.

Willis, who, in her astonishment at her sudden return, asked her a hundred questions in a breath.

Henrietta satisfied her eager curiosity with a succinct detail of all that had happened to her that day, which had indeed been a very busy one.

The honest heart of Mrs. Willis was variously affected with the different parts of her story. She wept for her sufferings; she execrated the malicious Miss Cordwain; she praised the countess; and was exceedingly solicitous about the purport of Lord B——'s designs, which, from what she had heard of his behaviour, appeared to her very mysterious. But Henrietta, who had a thorough contempt for that young lord, declared, that although he should break with Miss Cordwain, and address her upon honourable terms, yet she could not bring her heart to approve of him.

'He is mean,' said she, 'and sordid in his temper. His principles are bad; he is a lord, but he is not a gentle-

man; and I am sure I could never esteem him. Besides, the countess, who is more alarmed about the sentiments he has for me than I think she has reason, depends upon my honour not to encourage any overtures from him, and I will not abuse her confidence.'

'It is easy,' pursued she, smiling, 'to be just when our own inclinations do not oppose it. I shall pretend to no merit in making this sacrifice, if ever it be in my power to make it; because in reality it will not be a great one. If riches and splendour could have made me happy, I would have married Sir Isaac Darby; for it was not his age that I objected to most, but to those qualities and manners which made his age contemptible.'

'But, surely, my dear,' said Mrs. Willis, 'your gratitude would be engaged, should Lord B——, in the present inequality of your circumstances, make you an offer of his hand.'

'Not at all,' replied Henrietta, with some warmth: 'no man has a right to the love or esteem of a woman on whom he has entertained dishonourable designs, and, failing in them, offers marriage at last. The lover, who marries his mistress only because he cannot gain her upon easier terms, has just as much generosity as the highwayman who leaves a traveller in possession of his money, because he is not able to take it from him.'

'Well, well, my dear Miss,' said Mrs. Willis, smiling, 'I can collect this at least from the nice distinctions you make, that your heart is absolutely free; you would not reason so well, were

'were there any secret passion in the case.'

'Surely,' replied Henrietta, 'you do not imagine that I should become less delicate in my notions for being in love: that passion, like some plants, derives it's qualities from the soil it grows in; for instance, in Lord B——, it is mean, selfish, wavering.'

'And what would it be in you?' interrupted Mrs. Willis.

'Ah! no matter,' cried Henrietta; 'I am not in love yet, and never will be with a man who has such sentiments as Lord B——; he had best be constant to Miss Cordwain. Plebeian lords, and the nobility of the shop and warehouse, are equal matches.'

To this remark Mrs. Willis, who was pleased with the vivacity of her fair friend, assented only with a smile: for supper was now placed upon the table; and, as she knew Henrietta had not dined, she was extremely solicitous to make her eat; and with the same maternal fondness hurried her soon to bed, that she might recover the fatigue she had suffered during the day.

The next morning, at eleven o'clock, our fair heroine set out in an hackney-coach for —— Square, where Lady D—— lived, to whom she was to deliver the commendatory letter which the countess had given her.

The lady was at her toilet when she read her sister's letter, which Henrietta had sent in to her, and immediately ordered her admittance. Surprized at the elegant figure which met her eyes in the glass upon our fair heroine's entering the room, she hastily turned her head, and gazed on Henrietta so intently, that she blushed; which Lady D—— observing, obligingly desired her to sit down, and said, she would talk to her presently.

Henrietta modestly placed herself at a distance, but so luckily for the lady's curiosity, that she could have a full view of her in her glass, without renewing her confusion.

'My sister,' said Lady D——, breaking silence at last, 'has mentioned you very advantageously, Mrs. Benson; I wish it may be in my power to serve you.'

Henrietta bowed respectfully.

'You are very young,' pursued the lady; 'I suppose Miss Cordwain's was the first service you ever lived in?'

At the word service, Henrietta blushed

again; and indeed, the lady did not pronounce it without some hesitation, for having a sensible and ingenuous mind, she felt the impropriety of the term when used towards a person who, notwithstanding the humility of her deportment, had a dignity in her looks and air which commanded respect. She took notice of this emotion, and the more because she saw it endeavoured to be suppressed; and being desirous of gaining some farther knowledge of her, she asked her a hundred little questions, which she thought would lead her to an explanation of her circumstances.

Henrietta avoided making a discovery of herself, but answered in such a manner, as, without satisfying the lady's curiosity, gave her a very good opinion of her candour and her sense; but she was particularly struck with the graceful ease with which she talked; and observed such a perfect politeness in her manners, as persuaded her she was born in a much higher rank than her present situation allowed the probability of.

Lady D——'s daughter now entered the room, and asked her mamma, if she desired to hear her take a lesson from her singing-master that morning?

The lady ordered the master to be admitted, upon which Henrietta rose up to go away; but the lady told her, with a benevolent smile, that she should stay and hear Miss D—— perform, and desired her to resume her seat.

While the young lady was singing, Lady D—— kept her eyes fixed on Henrietta's face; and, from the sweet expression in it, supposing that she had a taste for musick, asked her, if she had ever been taught?

Henrietta, though not willing to make a display of talents which were not necessary to her present condition, yet owned, that she had a little knowledge of musick.

Lady D—— immediately desired to hear her sing; and the young lady at the same time presenting her guitar to her, she was obliged to comply. Her air, her attitude, the exquisite grace with which she touched the little instrument, the sweetness of her voice, and the sensibility in her fine eyes, charmed Lady D——, who was an enthusiastic admirer of the art; so that she cried out in a kind of transport, 'Mr. Minime, would you not be proud of such a scholar?'

'Madam,' said the master, bowing, 'the

the young gentlewoman has a very pretty voice and manner, to be sure: but if Miss D—— applies closely to musick for seven or eight years longer, and does not suffer her mind to be distracted with the study of other sciences, I shall have more reason to be proud of my scholar than any master in the world.

This speech forced a smile from Henrietta, who the third time rose up to be gone, upon hearing a female visiter announced; but Lady D——, conceiving that she was not obliged to a strict observation of ceremony with the person now entering, (who was of a very low birth, but had a competent fortune left her by a father, who had held it as a maxim of sound wisdom, that money should be got by any means) again insisted upon Henrietta's staying, telling her, she had thought of something for her, and that she would acquaint her with it as soon as the lady was gone.

Henrietta had but just time to express a grateful acknowledgment of her kindness, when the visiter was introduced. She was a woman of a very mean aspect, but had a great deal of self-sufficiency in her air. After the usual compliments were over, she threw herself into an easy chair, and examined Henrietta with such extreme attention, that she blushed.

The lady, who took consequence to herself from the power of throwing an ingenuous mind into confusion, finding that Henrietta was oppressed by her looks, gazed at her the more earnestly: and having indulged herself several minutes in this exertion of her superiority, thought it was now time to make the poor bashful girl stare in her turn, and began to display her wit and learning; the former in an inundation of words that swallowed up her meaning; and the latter in French words and phrases, brought in to supply the deficiencies of her own native tongue.

Lady D——, who was used to divert herself with the ridiculous singularity of this woman's character, listened to her with complaisance. But Henrietta, who began to conceive a very mean opinion of a lady who seemed to value herself so highly upon the knowledge of a language which was now become a part of every cobbler's daughter's education, beheld her with an indifference that sensibly wounded her pride, and made her have

recourse to other methods to impress her prodigious consequence upon her; and since she could not make her stare at her learning, she was resolved to make her wonder at her principles.

'You know, Lady D——,' said she abruptly, 'I do not often go to church.'

'I know it, and I am sorry for it,' replied her ladyship.

'Upon my word,' said she, 'I have too much reverence for the Deity to go to a place where it is ten to one but I shall hear him blasphemed.'

Henrietta now began to stare indeed. The wonderful lady proceeded—

'I never pretend to deny that I am a deist.'

'You must pardon me, Mrs. ——,' interrupted Lady D——, 'if I tell you that I really think you often declare that very improperly; I have heard you say so before your children and servants.'

'Madam,' replied Mrs. ——, 'I take care that my servants shall not think me an atheist. They know my principles better: they know I am a deist; they have heard me declare that I believe there is an intelligent cause which governs the world by physical rules. As for moral attributes, there is no such thing; it is impious and absurd to suppose it. The arbitrary constitution of things in the human system produces happiness and misery; that is to say, misery and happiness is productive of—or rather, as I said before, the arbitrary constitution of things, vice and virtue, is necessarily produced by—that is, necessarily brings on happiness or misery. Prayer, and such like artifices of religion, is foolish: for whatever is, is right. To talk of imitating God, is blasphemy. His Providence is extended to collective bodies only; he has no regard to individuals; nor is the soul a distinct substance from the body. There is no future state; it is all a fiction. To argue from unequal distributions is absurd and blasphemous. Whatever is, is best. The law of nature is sufficiently clear; and there is no need of any supernatural revelation.'

'I must entreat you, Madam,' interrupted Lady D——, seeing her eldest daughter that moment enter the room, 'to change the discourse now; Miss D—— has not been used to such deep reasoning'

‘reasoning on these awful subjects, and may perhaps mistake what you are saying for blasphemy.’

‘More absurd mistakes than that may be made, Madam,’ replied Mrs. —, ‘when persons are not allowed to exercise their mental faculties.—But your ladyship is going to dress—I interrupt you.’ Saying this, she rose up, and Lady D—— making no efforts to detain her, took her leave.

‘I have always hated that woman,’ said Miss D——, as soon as she was gone, ‘ever since I heard her ridicule parental affection, and call it brutal instinct.’

‘Oh!’ said Lady D——, laughing, ‘it would ill become one of her elevated understanding to have natural affections: those she treats as vulgar prejudices. Her own sex are the objects of her scorn, because they are subject to such weaknesses as tenderness and pity. She reads Seneca on friendship in the morning; and exclaims, “O the exalted passion! how divinely he treats it! what noble sentiments!” In the afternoon, she overreaches her friend, and applauds her own wisdom. Epictetus is studied with great care. She will preach a moral sermon out of Epictetus that will last two hours. Epictetus teaches her to curb her passions. She reads him intently while her maid is combing her hair, and closes her book to storm at the poor trembling creature for accidentally hurting her with the comb.’

CHAP. II.

IN WHICH HENRIETTA MAKES A VERY FANTASTICK DISTINCTION.

HENRIETTA could not help smiling at Lady D——’s satirical manner of exposing the follies of the lady who had just left the room: but a female free-thinker was, in her opinion, so shocking a character, that she would much rather have seen it the object of abhorrence than mirth.

Lady D—— put an end to her reflections: for, turning towards her, ‘Mrs. Benson,’ said she, ‘it is time to think of you now.’ Henrietta immediately rose from her seat.

‘There is a lady of my acquaintance,’ pursued Lady D——, ‘to whom your

‘accomplishments of singing and playing, will make you a very acceptable companion: and indeed, I think it is a pity a young woman of your appearance and genteel education should remain in the condition of a servant, which I am persuaded you was not born to.’

Henrietta blushed; which Lady D—— observing, ‘Come,’ said she, smiling, ‘be ingenuous, and confess that the proposal I have made you will suit you better than being a servant.’

‘Indeed, Madam, it does not,’ replied Henrietta; ‘I am extremely obliged to your ladyship for your kind intentions, but I had rather be recommended to the lady as a servant than in any other character.’

‘You surprize me,’ said Lady D——, after a little pause; ‘what objections can you have to a situation so much to be preferred to servitude?’

‘I am very sure, Madam,’ said Henrietta, ‘that I have not too much pride to be a servant, since it is necessary I should be one: but I am afraid I cannot so easily submit to be a dependent.’

Lady D——, a little disappointed to find herself so far below this obscure young person in delicacy of sentiment, answered gravely,

‘Well, since it must be so, I will serve you in your own way; let me see you again a few days hence, by that time I may possibly have heard of something for you.’

Henrietta again politely thanked her ladyship, and withdrew, leaving Lady D—— and her daughter differently affected with her behaviour in this last instance: for young minds are apt to be struck with uncommon sentiments, and to admire such as seem to possess them; while persons advanced in years, either from experience of the world, or the natural depravity of the human heart, ascribe every thing to affectation and design that contradicts certain received maxims in life.

However, Henrietta’s peculiarity made Lady D—— extremely desirous to know who she was, and whether there was any thing extraordinary in her circumstances. She wrote to the countess her sister, expressing her curiosity: but that lady was resolved to keep Henrietta’s secret, as well in regard to the promise she had given her, as because she really thought

an unreasonable discovery of her true name and family would be disadvantageous to the plan she had laid.

She therefore contented herself with telling her sister, in answer, that Mrs. Benson was a very deserving young woman, who had been well brought up, but, by misfortunes in her family, reduced to go to service.

Lady D—— was satisfied with this account; and when Henrietta, in obedience to her commands, waited on her again, she received her with great benevolence; told her, she had recommended her to a lady of great fortune, whose place she believed would be an advantageous one; and ordered her own woman to go with a message to the lady, and introduce her.

Henrietta having a hackney-coach waiting, Lady D——'s woman and her, after some ceremonies which our fair heroine would gladly have dispensed with, seated themselves in it; and, as soon as it drove from the door, the Abigail began—

'Well, Madam, you are certainly very fortunate; Mrs. Autumn's place is one of the best in Christendom: you have nothing to do but to flatter her, and you will gain her heart for ever.'

'Is the lady fond of flattery, then?' said Henrietta.

'Oh! immensely,' cried the other; 'but, for fear you should mistake, and compliment her in the wrong place, you must know (and I think it is very lucky that I had an opportunity of instructing you) you must know that, though she is between forty and fifty years of age, she affects to be thought extremely young; and having been handsome in her youth, as my lady says, she forgets she is no longer so, now she is old.'

'Now, dear Madam, this is your cue. Be sure to praise her bloomy complexion, and the brightness of her eyes; and, if she bids you guess how old she is, as 'tis ten to one but she will some time hence, don't exceed twenty years, I charge you.'

'The poor simple girl that lived with her last, lost her place, by saying, when she asked her how old she believed her to be, that she took her ladyship to be about the same age as her mother. She was a vulgar creature, to be sure. You, Madam, are in no danger of speaking so improperly. But

on certain occasions you may contradict her rudely, and she will be the more pleased; as, for instance, when she says she looks horridly! tell her, in a surly way, as if you were vexed at her perverseness, that you never saw her look so handsome.'

'Mighty well,' said Henrietta, smiling, 'I perceive you are excellent in this art; I am——'

'Oh! no thanks, dear Madam,' interrupted Lady D——'s woman, 'I am fond of doing good offices.'

'I was going to say,' replied Henrietta, 'that I am afraid these wise documents will be thrown away upon me.'

'I hope not,' said the other, gravely. 'Come, take courage, you are but a young beginner; these things come of course. I should be sorry you were not capable of taking good counsel.'

They were now arrived at Mrs. Autumn's house. Lady D——'s woman sent up word, that she was come with the person her lady had recommended to her ladyship; upon which both were ordered to go up stairs.

They found the lady giving audience to a milliner, a mantua-maker, and a mercer. Several pieces of silk lay unrolled before her; and a vast variety of ribbands, lappets, egrets, and other fashionable trifles, were spread upon a table, on which she leaned, in a thoughtful posture, as unable to determine her choice.

When Henrietta and her companion entered, she raised her eyes, and nodding familiarly at Lady D——'s woman, who approached her, curtsying; 'You find me excessively busy, Mrs. Ellis,' said she: 'well, what has Lady D—— sent me? Oh! a good likely body,' pursued she, looking at Henrietta. 'My compliments, Mrs. Ellis, and thanks. You see I have hardly time to speak to you. The young woman may stay, I'll talk to her presently.'

Mrs. Ellis withdrew; and the lady resuming her contemplative posture, gave Henrietta an opportunity of considering her at leisure.

If Lady D——'s woman had not fixed her age at somewhat more than forty, she would have concluded her to have been older, by the deep furrows in her face, her fallen cheeks, and the poor shrivelled hand that supported her head: but her dress spoke her scarce sixteen; a French

French fillet supplied the place of a cap, and served to bind the few straggling hairs that graced her temples, to a tête, which was so loaded with hair, that her head seemed to be of an enormous size. The rest of her dress was suited exactly to the childish ornaments of her head; and, though no object could be more ridiculous, yet Henrietta beheld her with a serious concern; for true benevolence compassionates those follies which unfeeling hearts sacrifice to mirth.

Mrs. Autumn at length rose up. 'That must be the thing,' said she, pointing to a pink and silver. She then gave some directions to her milliner; and, suddenly interrupting herself, turned with a lively air to the mercer, and asked him, why he had not cut off the silk?

'Your ladyship did not tell me how much you wanted,' replied the tradesman.

'Lord! I am the giddiest creature,' exclaimed Mrs. Autumn. This matter, however, was soon settled: and the important business with the milliner dispatched, she dismissed her trades-people; and, throwing herself with an affected air upon a settee, ordered Henrietta to come forward.

'I was afraid,' said she, 'that Lady D——, who is very fond of seeing grave solemn faces about her, had sent me some antiquated creature that would have frightened me; but you seem to be a sprightly young body: we shall agree very well, I hope.'

Henrietta curtsied.

'I hate old people,' pursued the lady; 'they are generally obstinate and surly. God help us! we shall all be old if we live—but when one is in years one's self, it is time enough to be plagued with the humours of those that are. You will suit me extremely well.'

Henrietta curtsied again.

'You are no talker, I find,' said Mrs. Autumn, a little chagrined that the hints she had thrown out had produced nothing which could flatter her extreme desire of being thought young. 'Well, there is no great harm in that; I shall take you upon Lady D——'s recommendation. As for terms——'

'Madam,' said Henrietta, who now for the first time opened her mouth, 'they shall be whatever you think proper.'

'Very well,' said the lady, 'we will talk no more about them, then; if you

'can find out how to please me, which will be no difficult matter I assure you, my place may prove a very advantageous one, and the sooner you come the better.'

Henrietta told her, she was ready to come whenever she pleased. Upon which, Mrs. Autumn, with the pretty impatience of youth, asked her, if it would be any inconvenience to her to come that very night?

Henrietta, who was naturally obliging, assured her it would not; and was dismissed with a gracious smile for her ready compliance.

Mrs. Willis, who had flattered herself that she should enjoy the company of her amiable friend for a few weeks at least, was greatly disappointed when she found she was to lose her so soon; and gently blamed her for being so precipitate.

Henrietta gave her the character of the lady she was going to live with, and repeated what she had said to her. 'You may be sure,' added she, 'that I shall never please Mrs. Autumn in the way she expects to be pleased. Flattery is always mean; but to flatter folly, is, in my opinion, criminal. However, I gladly embraced the first opportunity that offered to shew my willingness to oblige, though I would not flatter her. You will hardly believe me, perhaps,' said she, smiling, 'when I tell you, that one of the greatest bars to my happiness, in my present humble situation, is the difficulty of pleasing without wounding my own delicacy and candour. It is not easy to live well with our superiors, and preserve our integrity, but it is not impossible; and, if I fail in that attempt, I shall at least have this satisfaction, that I suffer in the cause of virtue.'

'It requires all that sweetness of temper which you possess,' said Mrs. Willis, 'to live with a woman of Mrs. Autumn's fantastick turn, without being disgusted with it. What an absurdity, at fifty years to expect to be thought young! and to imagine that, by affecting the follies of youth, she shall have the bloom of it also! Our sex have been reproached with never cultivating our minds till we can no longer please by our persons; but here is a woman who has not judgment enough to know when she ought to resign the hope of pleasing by her person. Take my

'my word for it, you will be very unhappy with her, unless you resolve to accommodate yourself to her humour, and soothe her in her ridiculous folly.' 'That I will not do,' replied Henrietta; 'and since I have learned not to fear poverty, my happiness will never depend upon others.'

Mrs. Willis, finding she could not prevail with her fair friend to alter her resolution, acquiesced in it at length; and Henrietta, taking an affectionate leave of her, repaired to her new habitation.

CHAP. III.

WHICH SHEWS HENRIETTA IN HER NEW SERVICE, WHERE SHE ACQUITS HERSELF EXTREMELY ILL.

THE lady being engaged with company when Henrietta arrived, she did not see her till late at night, when she was summoned to undress her.

'Come hither, Henrietta,' said she, as soon as she entered the room; 'I have seen Lady D—— since you was here. She has given me such an advantageous account of your understanding, that I am resolved to make you my confidant.'

At the word Confidant Henrietta looked a little confused: but the lady, who did not observe her emotion, reclined her head upon her hand, and fixing her eyes on her glass, to see how this pensive attitude became her—

'I am certainly,' pursued she, sighing, 'the most unfortunate woman in the world! Benson, if you would be happy, never marry.'

'I have no thought of marriage at present, Madam,' said Henrietta.

'Ah, how I envy your freedom!' said the antiquated fair; 'you are plagued with no unreasonable jealousy. Benson, you will not be here long before you are a witness to my persecutions. I wish I could conceal them, but that is impossible.'

'I am sorry, Madam,' said Henrietta, who was under a necessity of saying something in answer to this strange stuff, 'to hear that you have any thing to make you uneasy.'

'It does not signify,' exclaimed the lady, with an emotion which she herself

took to be real; 'I shall be choaked if I don't speak: may I depend upon your prudence, Benson!—But I am sure I may. Well, then, you must know there is a poor young fellow who pretends—But why do I say pretends—who is desperately—what shall I call it—who has an unconquerable, invincible, hopeless, fatal, dying passion, for—for me, in short. Is not this a shocking thing?'

'Indeed! Madam,' replied Henrietta, with great truth, 'I pity you extremely.'

'Aye, am I not greatly to be pitied, child?' said the lady. 'Then the poor wretch cannot conceal his folly; and it makes Mr. Autumn so uneasy, that really his temper is intolerable.'

'Pardon me, Madam,' said Henrietta; 'but I am not surprized that Mr. Autumn is uneasy at such folly, as you justly call it.'

'Why, to be sure, it is folly,' said Mrs. Autumn: 'but then, if one reflects a little—It is not folly neither—for love, you know, is an involuntary passion. So that—but you have a very unfeeling heart, Benson; and yet, to judge by your looks, you should have great sensibility. Pray, have you never felt the tender passion?'

'If you mean love, Madam,' replied Henrietta, 'indeed I cannot say I have.'

'Well, you will be a happy creature,' said the lady, sighing, 'if you can always maintain this indifference: but poor Languish must not expect to meet with much compassion from you. Poor wretch!' continued she, laughing, 'I cannot help triumphing a little; I have nick-named him Languish from his eternal sighing, and the melancholy roll of his eyes. Mr. Autumn cannot endure to hear me call him by this name; but I love to plague him a little now and then: what signifies power, if one does not shew one has it. Yet he ought to be satisfied with me for what I did this evening, when Languish indiscreetly betrayed the violence of his passion, by eagerly running (though there were two gentlemen nearer) to take up my glove which I had dropped: I took no notice of the dying air with which he presented it to me; but, as if his touch had polluted it, I received it haughtily from him, and threw it aside. Sure this instance of disdain was enough to satisfy a jealous husband; yet mine, instead of looking pleased,

‘pleased, coloured with jealousy and rage, and gave me such furious glances—however, this will always be the case, where there is so great a disproportion in age; Mr. Autumn is not less than forty. But hey-day! is the girl asleep?’ continued she, looking at Henrietta, who stood fixed in thought; for the absurd affectation of her mistress gave her matter enough for reflection. ‘Come, undress me: Mr. Autumn will wonder at my long stay; and as he is ingenious in tormenting himself, he will possibly suspect that I have been reading a letter from this rival of his; but there he over-rates his presumption; he has not ventured to write to me yet, his passion is only expressed in sighs and looks.’

Henrietta made haste to obey her, her patience being almost exhausted; for Mrs. Autumn had got on a subject which she knew not how to quit; and her women being the only persons to whom she could utter these extravagancies, without any danger of being mortified with sarcastic hints of age, and such envious and unjust reflections, she made herself amends with them for the reserve she was, much against her will, obliged to maintain with others.

Henrietta was at length ordered to wait on her to her chamber, and soon after retired to her own, greatly out of humour with her mistress, and not a little displeased at herself, to find that her philosophy, by which she was enabled to bear the change of her fortune with patience and resignation, could not guard her against fretfulness and disgust at the follies she was forced to be witness to.

Mrs. Autumn, like other modern ladies, lay in bed always till it was very late: this being one of those happy expedients for killing time (as the fashionable phrase is) which, to discover, employs the inventions of persons of rank and fortune. Henrietta had attended three whole hours in her lady’s dressing-room, in expectation every moment of being summoned to assist her to rise, when Mr. Autumn at length entered the room.

His servant, while he was dressing him, had told him, that his lady’s new woman, whom he had a glimpse of as he passed by her on the stairs, was the greatest beauty he ever beheld; so that, being curious to see her, he came to breakfast with his wife that morning.

Henrietta rose up at his entrance; Mr. Autumn bowed, looked at her attentively, and thought his man had taste. But he was still more struck with her noble air than the charms of her face, and felt an uneasy emotion when he saw her continue standing, with that humble respect which, although it became her situation, seemed little suited to the dignity of her appearance. ‘Is not Mrs. Autumn up, Madam?’ said he, not being able to forbear using that respectful style. Henrietta, supposing he did not know her rank in his family, replied,

‘I expect my lady will ring every moment, Sir.’

‘Pray let her know that I am come to breakfast with her,’ said Mr. Autumn.

Henrietta went immediately into her lady’s chamber, and, finding her awake, delivered her message.

‘Lord bless me!’ said Mrs. Autumn, ‘what new whim is this? He does not use to invade my apartment in a morning: I suppose he is come to tease me with some of his jealous fancies.’ Well, since it must be so, order breakfast to be sent in, and come to me directly.’

‘What a ridiculous woman is this,’ thought Henrietta, as she went out of the room, ‘to torment herself, at her age, with the notion of her husband being jealous of her!’

The good lady, when she returned, charged her not to leave the room while they were at breakfast. ‘Your presence,’ said she, ‘may perhaps be some restraint upon him.’

She then slipped on a night-gown, and went in a frightful dishabille to attend her complaisant spouse; for she was one of those ladies who dress for every body but their husbands.

Henrietta was not sorry that she was directed to wait, for she was extremely desirous of knowing whether her lady had any reason for the uneasiness she expressed. Mr. Autumn’s good humour and complaisance soon put that matter out of doubt; but Mrs. Autumn was resolved to persuade her maid that her husband was jealous; and, laughing affectedly, cried—

‘Well, don’t be chagrined, Mr. Autumn, but I protest I dreamt of poor Languish last night!’

The husband shook his head, winked at his wife, and pointed to Henrietta, as if

if he had said, 'Don't expose yourself before your new servant.'

'Why, how you frown now!' pursued Mrs. Autumn; 'I knew you would be angry. Lord! what does it signify of whom one dreams? one does not always think of the persons one dreams of. I wish I had not told you.'

'I wish you had not,' said Mr. Autumn, biting his lip with vexation at her folly. The lady then lowering her voice, as if she was not willing to be heard by Henrietta, though she took care not to make it impossible, repeated—

'Trifles, light as air,

'Are to the jealous, confirmations strong

'As proofs of holy writ.'

'You are well read in Shakespeare, Madam,' said Mr. Autumn, who was willing to give another turn to the discourse.

'Oh!' exclaimed she, 'he has touched the passion of jealousy finely in his character of Othello; I think the Moor was uneasy about a dream too.'

Just then somebody tapped at the door; Henrietta opened it: one of the footmen delivered a message from one lady, enquiring how Mrs. Autumn did, and a sealed-up card from another.

While the servant was speaking, Mrs. Autumn called out, 'What makes the fellow whisper in that manner, as if the message he brings was a secret!' Henrietta delivered her the card, which she threw upon the table without opening it. 'I am resolved,' said she, 'to turn that blockhead away; his mysterious manner is enough to put strange fancies into people's heads.'

'The strange fancies are all your own,' said Mr. Autumn, peevishly.

'I thought it would be so,' cried the lady; 'you are out of humour. What, is this sealed-up card the grievance? Come, we will open it, and you shall know the contents.'

'Indeed I will not,' said Mr. Autumn, rising; 'I have not the least curiosity about the contents.—Good morning to you, my dear; I am going out.'

'Well, Benson,' said Mrs. Autumn, as soon as her husband had left the room, 'is not this a comfortable life I live? What a passion that poor man is in!'

'Was Mr. Autumn angry, Madam?' said Henrietta.

'To be sure he was,' said the lady; 'did you not observe it?'

'Indeed, Madam,' replied Henrietta, 'Mr. Autumn did not seem to me to be angry.'

'No, really!' said Mrs. Autumn; 'you have a great deal of penetration, it must be confessed. You think you are very discreet now, but you are mistaken. However, I charge you, don't gossip among your companions about Mr. Autumn's unhappy jealousy; I don't want the world to know what I suffer upon that account.'

'I never will mention it, Madam, to any body,' replied Henrietta.

'Nay, for that matter,' said Mrs. Autumn, 'you might mention it without any bad intention, by way of pitying me, or so; and, perhaps, I should not think the worse of you. But if you can be silent, Benson, you will oblige me; reports of this kind, you know, should not be circulated.'

'They never shall by me, Madam,' said Henrietta.

'Enough, enough,' cried Mrs. Autumn; 'I hate long speeches.'

Henrietta was pleased with a declaration which enjoined her silence; for if it be tiresome to listen to the fallies of affectation and impertinence, it is much more so to be obliged to answer them.

CHAP. IV.

GIVES THE READER HOPES OF A FAVOURABLE CHANGE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR FAIR HEROINE.

HENRIETTA had exercised her patience for some weeks in the service of Mrs. Autumn; but every day producing new instances of her folly, she resolved to quit her as soon as the countess came to town. She conceived she was in some degree accountable to that lady for her actions, since it was through her recommendation that she had been introduced to Mrs. Autumn; and she thought it necessary, for the justification of her conduct, to have so considerable a witness of it's being irreproachable.

Her lady, though she found herself always disappointed in that complaisance to her whims which she endeavoured to exact from her, yet ventured to make

her a proposal, which her own want of delicacy hindered her from seeing the impropriety of.

She had taken it into her head to try her supposed lover's constancy; and therefore wrote a letter to him, in the character of a lady unknown, on whose heart he had made a deep impression, but who was resolved not to discover herself till she knew whether his was wholly disengaged.

This letter, she doubted not, would produce a declaration that would afford matter of great triumph to herself, who she suspected was the secret object of his adoration.

She acquainted her woman with her scheme, and gravely desired her to copy the letter, for Languish, she said, knew her hand.

Henrietta blushed with surprize and shame at this improper request, and very frankly begged to be excused from complying with it.

'What!' said Mrs. Autumn, a little confused, 'you dispute my commands, then!'

'I never refused to obey any of your commands before, Madam,' replied Henrietta; 'but this (pardon me, Madam) appears so strange.'

'You do not dare to suspect my virtue, I hope?' said Mrs. Autumn, in a lofty accent.

'It does not become me, Madam,' said Henrietta, 'to censure your actions.'

'No, certainly,' replied the lady, 'nor to refuse to do any thing that I order you to do: but I would fain know if you, in your great wisdom, think there is any thing improper in this little piece of gallantry.'

'My opinion is of no consequence, Madam,' replied Henrietta; 'I only beg to be excused from copying it.'

'Well, no more of the letter,' cried Mrs. Autumn; hastily: 'perhaps I had only a mind to try your discretion; perhaps, too, I shall like you the better for your steadiness. Be modest and reserved, and you will be sure of my approbation. Were you the best servant in the world, you would not do for me, unless you were extremely modest. And, now you know my mind, be cautious how you behave: modesty is a sure recommendation to my favour; I can pardon any fault in my servant but want of modesty.'

Henrietta, from this declaration, had reason to think herself pretty sure of her lady's favour; for the severest prude that ever declaimed against the monstrous levity of her own sex, could not have objected to the propriety of her behaviour: but, unhappily for her, she was that very day guilty of a fault, by which she incurred very shocking suspicions; for having neglected to fill her lady's smelling-bottle with some fresh Eau de Luce, Mrs. Autumn declared, that such heedlessness must necessarily proceed from her having her thoughts continually employed upon fellows; and telling her, that she could not endure such a creature in her sight, ordered her to be gone immediately.

Henrietta did not think proper to offer any answer to this strange charge; but quitting her presence immediately, and her house a few moments afterwards, she returned to Mrs. Willis, who, seeing her alight at her door, eagerly flew to receive her.

'I have great news for you, my dear Miss,' said she: 'I was this moment preparing to set out in a coach to bring you a letter, which was left here by one of your uncle's servants. It is very true,' pursued she, seeing Henrietta look surprized. 'I asked the young man, who he came from? and he said, the Earl of ——. You may believe I am impatient to know the contents of this letter. Come, my dear, and read it; I hope all your troubles are over now.'

Henrietta receiving the letter from her, which she took out of her pocket, followed her into the parlour, and breaking the seal—

'It is my uncle's hand, indeed,' said she, 'and this is what he writes:'

'Mrs. Courteney is desired to call at the Earl of ———'s, to-morrow morning at twelve o'clock: he has something to propose to her for her advantage.'

'Did I not tell you, Miss,' said Mrs. Willis, exultingly, 'that the step you had taken would produce a favourable change in your fortune?'

'Don't be too sanguine in your expectations, my dear Mrs. Willis,' said Miss Courteney; 'who knows but my uncle may have another Sir Isaac Darby to propose to me? However, I will certainly wait upon him, and, if possible, will be punctual to the hour he has prescribed me; but if nothing should come

'come of this overture of his lordship's, 'I shall be your guest again for some time. I have left Mrs. Autumn.'

She then related to her some circumstances of that lady's extravagant folly, and the cause and manner of their parting; which, together with their comments on Lord ——'s message, furnished them with matter sufficient for discourse during the remainder of that day. What happened to our fair heroine the next, will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. V.

DESTROYS THE EXPECTATIONS RAISED BY THE FOREGOING CHAPTER.

HENRIETTA was at her uncle's house exactly at the hour prescribed her; and, upon sending in her name, was desired to walk into his lordship's library.

The earl was there to receive her: he had with him two of his daughters; but these young ladies withdrew immediately, after saluting her in a very distant manner, which she returned with equal reserve and coldness.

'Miss Courteney,' said his lordship, as soon as they were alone, 'I have been very angry with you for leaving your aunt in the strange manner you did.'

'I am extremely obliged to your lordship,' replied Henrietta, 'for taking so much interest in any thing that concerns me.'

'You certainly acted very indiscreetly,' said the earl; 'but what is past cannot be helped. You have had the good luck to make yourself friends, notwithstanding this wrong step. You have been at the countess of ——'s seat, I hear.'

'Yes, my lord,' answered Henrietta; 'I was there with ——'

'The countess is very much your friend,' interrupted his lordship, hastily, 'but her son is more so.'

Henrietta blushed, and was silent.

'I will not,' pursued his lordship, 'examine into your motives for leaving Lady Meadows; but I will, if possible, accommodate matters between you, provided you will concur with me in my endeavours for that purpose.'

'I desire nothing more earnestly than to be reconciled to my aunt,' replied Henrietta.

'I believe it will be your own fault if you are not,' resumed his lordship; 'and if you recover her favour, your good fortune will not stop there. To keep you no longer in suspense, then, Lord B—— has declared a passion for you, has solicited my interest towards effecting a reconciliation between your aunt and you, that he may pay his addresses to you in a proper manner.'

'I am surprized that Lord B—— should make such a proposal,' said Henrietta; 'he is engaged to the daughter of a rich citizen.'

'No, not engaged,' replied the earl; 'the match has been proposed, and he has visited the young woman.'

'Indeed, my lord,' replied Henrietta, 'the affair is much farther advanced.'

'Well, well,' interrupted his lordship, 'we will suppose that the writings are drawn and every thing settled; but they are not married, nor engaged neither.'

'His inclinations, you find, have taken another turn: you have no reason to blame him for this, I am sure; and it would be strange indeed, if a man of his rank and fortune was to mind the censures of the vulgar.'

Henrietta was silent. His lordship proceeded.

'Lord B—— will find it difficult, no doubt, to prevail upon the earl to break off this treaty, and consent to his marrying you, though Lady Meadows should offer to make you her heir; because in that case your fortune would be still less than that of this citizen, whom he has chosen for him. Nevertheless, he does not despair of effecting this, provided your aunt will do for you what it is expected she would before you was so unhappy as to disoblige her. In this Lord B—— sufficiently shews the sincerity and ardour of his passion. It is your part now to convince him that you are not ungrateful.'

'What would your lordship have me to do?' said Henrietta.

'I would have you submit to your aunt,' said the earl, 'and regain her affection, if possible. Lord B—— has reason to expect this compliance from you.'

‘ I will do every thing I ought to do,’ replied Henrietta, ‘ to recover my aunt’s favour, and this without any view to Lord B——’s offers.’

‘ Well, we shall not examine too nicely into that matter,’ interrupted his lordship, smiling. ‘ All that remains to be done, is this: I will see Lady Meadows myself; she will be in town soon, I suppose; Lord B——’s proposal, which I will acquaint her with, will captivate her attention, and be your best justification. As for what little concessions she may expect from you, I shall leave them to be settled by yourselves.’

‘ There are certain concessions, however,’ said Henrietta, ‘ which it is impossible for me to make, and which, if my aunt insists upon as the necessary conditions of a reconciliation between us, I must still continue under her displeasure, and hazard all the consequences of it.’

‘ I am afraid you are going to say some silly thing or other,’ interrupted his lordship, rising from his seat; which motion Henrietta understanding as a hint for her to hasten her departure, rose also.

‘ I will detain your lordship no longer,’ said she, ‘ than just to tell you, that some time ago my aunt proposed to me to settle all her fortune upon me, provided I would embrace the Roman-catholick religion.’

‘ A noble offer, upon my honour!’ said his lordship; ‘ and did you refuse it?’

‘ Would your lordship have had me accept of it?’ said Henrietta.

‘ What signifies what I would have had you do?’ replied the earl, peevishly. ‘ What did the consideration of your own interest suggest to you?’

‘ To refuse it, my lord,’ answered Henrietta, ‘ and I did so.’

‘ I find you are a very romantick girl,’ said his lordship; ‘ I am resolved to trouble myself no more about your affairs.’

‘ I hope it will not be imputed to me as a crime,’ said Henrietta, ‘ that I could not be bribed to change my religion.’

‘ Change your religion!’ repeated the earl, ‘ what necessity was there for changing your religion? You might have humoured the old woman, have gone with her to mass, and conformed to

some of her superstitious ceremonies, and be a good Protestant in your heart notwithstanding; the world, knowing your motives, would have commended you for such a prudent conduct. I see there is nothing to be done with you,’ pursued he, after a little pause. ‘ For the sake of the unfortunate man, who was your father, I would have been glad to have seen you well married; but Lord B—— is not such a fool as to take you without a fortune; and, as you cannot reasonably have any expectations but from Lady Meadows, who has no children, and may leave her fortune to whom she pleases, without doing anybody injustice, you know best whether it is worth your while to make a proper submission to her or not.’

‘ I will never make an improper one,’ said Henrietta.

‘ To be sure,’ said his lordship, ‘ your own wisdom is to be judge of that.’

‘ No, my lord,’ replied Henrietta; ‘ you shall, if you please, be judge—if my conscience—’

‘ Pray, let me hear nothing about your conscience,’ interrupted the earl; ‘ it is not my business to set matters even between you and your conscience; your aunt’s popish confessor, who is likely to be her heir, is skilful in those things: yet I would not advise you to consult him neither, for he is an interested person; but remember, that you may either secure to yourself a good estate, and marry a very deserving young nobleman, or continue in the obscurity and want your father left you in, which is all the legacy he bequeathed you. Think well of this, and then let your conscience determine. I do not advise you to do any thing against it.’

‘ My resolution is already fixed,’ said Henrietta: ‘ my conscience will neither permit me to change my religion, nor to counterfeit a change of it.’

‘ Do you insinuate by that,’ said his lordship, hastily, ‘ that I advised you to do either the one or the other?’

‘ My aunt already knows my mind,’ said Henrietta, evading a question which she could not answer truly without offending him: ‘ I have nothing to hope for from your lordship’s interposition, unless she has been pleased to give up this point; and I shall cheerfully return to that poverty my father bequeathed

‘ quenched me, since, with it, he be-
‘ queathed me piety and virtue.’

‘ It is a pity, he did not leave you
‘ prudence also,’ said the earl, who
‘ found something very provoking in this
‘ last speech; ‘ you would not then have
‘ disoblighed your aunt by your scanda-
‘ lous elopement from her, which has
‘ reduced you to the miserable condition
‘ you are now in, so that your friends
‘ know not how to take notice of you.’

‘ Friends! my lord,’ replied Hen-
rietta, rising in her temper; ‘ I have no
‘ friends, I have only relations.’

‘ That is likely to be their misfor-
‘ tune,’ said his lordship, who was very
‘ angry at this sarcasm: ‘ your unduti-
‘ fulness to your aunt makes you un-
‘ worthy of the notice of your relations;
‘ and I declare to you plainly, that from
‘ this moment I will never concern my-
‘ self about you.’

Henrietta disdained to make any an-
swer to this unjust and cruel speech: but
curtsied in silence, and withdrew; leav-
ing the earl very well satisfied with him-
self for the tender and parental part he
had acted towards his brother’s daugh-
ter, and furnished with excellent reasons
for never seeing her more.

‘ I had provided a match for her,’
said he, that very evening, to an humble
friend, who he knew would not fail to
spread the report, ‘ not unworthy of a
‘ daughter of my own. She rejected my
‘ proposal. She refused to make any
‘ submission to her aunt, whom I would
‘ have prevailed upon to be reconciled
‘ to her. Let her suffer the consequen-
‘ ces of her obstinacy and folly; I have
‘ done all that I ought to do, and am
‘ justified to the world.’

His lordship forgot to add, that the
submission which was expected from her
was nothing more than the change of her
religion, and the match she so obstinately
refused could not be effected without the
purchase of a fortune by an impious hy-
pocrisy. Nevertheless, the omission of
these trifling circumstances gave such a
colour to Henrietta’s behaviour, that she
was considered by all who heard her
uncle’s account of it, as an unhappy
young creature, who would ruin herself,
and be the blot of a noble family.

As for our fair heroine, she foresaw
that her uncle would justify his neglect
of her at her expence. She had every
thing against her; rank, fortune, power;

that general prejudice which prevails
against the unfortunate, and that as ge-
neral servility which adopts the passions
of the great. But these reflections filled
her with no uneasy apprehensions; for
there is this advantage in virtue, that it
is sufficient for itself, and needs not the
applause or support of others; it’s own
consciousness is it’s best reward.

CHAP. VI.

IN WHICH LORD B—— SHOWS HIM-
SELF A TRUE MODERN LOVER.

HENRIETTA, before she went
home, waited upon Lady D——,
to acquaint her that she had left Mrs.
Autumn. She avoided mentioning that
lady’s peculiarities, which had made it
impossible to please her; but with great
simplicity related the error she had been
guilty of, and the suspicions she had
incurred by it, which occasioned her dis-
mission.

Lady D—— diverted herself for some
time with the extreme delicacy of her
whimsical friend; and then told Hen-
rietta, that having still a good opinion of
her prudence and modesty, notwithstanding
the reasons Mrs. Autumn had to
suspect her, she would place her about
a young lady, a relation of her own.

Henrietta thanked her in very respect-
ful terms, and took her leave, after she
had, at Lady D——’s desire, left her a
direction to her lodgings, that she might
know where to send for her when it was
necessary.

At her return, she found the faithful
Mrs. Willis full of anxious impatience
to hear the success of her visit to the earl.
Henrietta, through respect to her uncle,
concealed the greatest part of his discourse
to her, but owned that she had no expec-
tations from him.

Mrs. Willis shrugged up her shoul-
ders: ‘ Then it was as you suspected,’
said she; ‘ your uncle has proposed some
‘ absurd match to you, and you have
‘ forfeited his future favour by not
‘ complying with it.’

‘ You will be surprized to hear that
‘ Lord B—— has made an application
‘ to my uncle,’ said Henrietta.

‘ Surprized!’ repeated Mrs. Willis;
‘ why, to be sure: considering how your
‘ affairs are circumstanced, this is a ge-
‘ nerous

nerous way of proceeding. Well, I hope you begin now to have a favourable opinion both of his love and honour.

'I am sure I think highly of his prudence,' replied Henrietta, smiling. 'Only mark the caution with which he acts in this affair: my poverty gave him hopes that I should be an easy conquest; and that passion which first manifested itself in an open attempt upon my honour, sought afterwards to allure me with bribes. It is not strange that persons who hold money to be the greatest good, should think it more than an equivalent for virtue. Here, however, he was disappointed again, to his great astonishment, no doubt, and marriage is this honourable lover's last resource; but this he does not offer till he is sure I shall have a fortune, if not equal to that of my rival the packer's daughter, yet at least sufficient to justify his choice in the opinion of the prudential part of the world; and perhaps he expects I should purchase the mighty blessing of his hand by the sacrifice, the temporary sacrifice at least, of those principles for which I have already suffered so much.'

'Have you any reason for this shocking suspicion?' interrupted Mrs. Willis.

'I think I have,' replied Henrietta: 'a reconciliation with my aunt is, it seems, a necessary preliminary to his addresses; and yet he heard from myself upon what condition that reconciliation could only be effected.' Henrietta, suddenly interrupting herself, cried out—'There he is; there is Lord B——.'

'Where? where?' said Mrs. Willis, running to the window. 'It is certainly he,' said Henrietta; 'he passed by in a chair.'

That instant they heard a loud rap at the door.

'As I live,' cried Mrs. Willis, in a violent flutter, 'he is come to visit you. I hope you will see him, Miss Courteney: hear what he has to say, pray do; there can be no harm in that, I am sure.'

'Well, well,' said Henrietta, smiling at her solicitude, 'I will see him; let him be shewn into the other parlour, if you please.'

Mrs. Willis, curious to see this young

lord, went herself to open the door. He bolted out of the chair; and, with a look and accent full of impatience, asked her, if the young lady that lodged there was at home?

'Miss Courteney, Sir?' said Mrs. Willis.

'Yes,' replied he, hastily; 'is she at home? can I see her? Pray tell her a gentleman from —— enquires for her.'

Mrs. Willis desired him to walk into the parlour; said she would acquaint the young lady with his being there; and, a few moments afterwards, Henrietta appeared.

Lord B—— flew to meet her, with the air of a lover conscious of the right he had to be well received; and taking her hand, which he respectfully kissed—

'Now,' cried he, exultingly, 'can you doubt the ardour of my passion for you? and will you not at length confess that it is possible for a man to deserve you?'

'Certainly, my lord,' replied Henrietta, 'it is very possible.'

'May I perish if I think so!' said he; 'but how poorly would words express my adoration of you! Judge of the purity, the ardour of my love, by what I have done to make you mine. Have you not seen your uncle, Miss Courteney?'

'I have, my lord,' replied Henrietta.

'You have!' repeated his lordship; 'and in that grave, cold accent, too! Surely my sentiments and designs are still unknown to you: it is impossible else that you should be thus insensible, nay ungrateful, I will say—for I have given no common proofs of love, I think.'

'Indeed, my lord,' replied Henrietta, who had a mind to teaze this generous lover a little, 'you shall not suffer for your noble disinterestedness—you shall not resign Miss Cordwain and her immense fortune for me.'

'Name not her fortune,' cried Lord B——; 'were it millions I would refuse it for you.'

'Nay, now your lordship is quite romantick,' said Henrietta, 'to prefer to a rich heiress an unhappy young woman, deserted by her relations, and reduced to seek a subsistence by her labour.'

'Call not my passion romantick,' interrupted

interrupted Lord B——, 'because it soars above common conceptions: a mind so elevated as yours might give it a juster epithet.'

'Were my aunt,' pursued Henrietta, 'to leave me her whole estate, you would still make no inconsiderable sacrifice by quitting Miss Cordwain for me, since my fortune would then be inferior to her's. But you know, my lord, I have no expectations from Lady Meadows: I have declared to my uncle the hard conditions upon which she offers to make me her heir, conditions that I never will accept of; and therefore I may well call your passion romantick, when, under such circumstances, you could think of making an application to my uncle.'

'To be sure, Madam,' said Lord B——, whose countenance expressed at once surprize, confusion, and disappointment, 'I did apply to the earl, not personally indeed. I contrived it so that a friend of mine, who is very intimate with his lordship, should give him a hint of your situation, and the sentiments I entertained for you: and, from the account my friend gave me of his success in his negotiation, I conceived that you might be prevailed upon—that is, that you would consider. For might I not hope, my dear Miss Courteney, that you would not be insensible of my affection?'

Here his lordship paused, and looked on Henrietta with a languishing air, seeming to wish and expect that her tenderness would spare him a farther explanation; but our fair heroine, who did not chuse to collect his meaning from the abrupt and unconnected sentences he had uttered, continued maliciously silent, as if she waited for the end of his discourse.

'I see,' resumed he, 'that I have not been happy enough to inspire you with any tender sentiments for me. Pardon me, Miss Courteney, but I must be so free as to tell you that, if you were not prepossessed in favour of another person, the proofs I have given you of my affection would not be received with such indifference.'

'There needs not any such prepossession,' replied Henrietta, vexed at this hint, 'to make me receive with indifference the proofs you have hitherto given me of that affection your lordship boasts of. Am I to reckon among these proofs, my lord, the insult you

offered me at Mrs. Eccles's, and the strange declaration you made me in the country?'

'Ah, how cruel is this recapitulation now!' cried Lord B——: 'do I not do justice to your birth, your beauty and virtue, by my present honourable intentions?'

'It is not enough for me, my lord,' said Henrietta, 'that your intentions are honourable now; to have merited my esteem, they should always have been so: but, to speak plainly, I am still doubtful of your intentions.'

'Doubtful still of my intentions!' repeated Lord B——: 'have I not declared them to your uncle, Madam? have I not solicited his interest with you?'

'Suppose that obtained, my lord,' said Henrietta, 'and that it has all the weight with me you could wish.'

'Why, then, we shall be happy, my angel,' cried he, taking her hand, and pressing it to his lips. 'You will be reconciled to your aunt, and I may hope for my father's consent to our union.'

'A reconciliation with my aunt is impossible,' said Henrietta, withdrawing her hand.

'Say not that it is impossible,' replied Lord B——, 'but that you have not complaisance enough for me to attempt it.'

'Did I not know it to be impossible,' resumed Henrietta, 'I would attempt it for my own sake; but nothing less than the sacrifice of my religion will satisfy my aunt: on this condition indeed she promises to settle her whole estate upon me; I think I once told your lordship so.'

'You did, my dear Miss Courteney,' interrupted Lord B——; 'and I adore you for your steady adherence to your principles.'

Henrietta was a little startled at so unexpected a declaration; but Lord B—— did not suffer her to remain long in the error his last words had occasioned.

'If Lady Meadows was not such a bigot,' pursued he, 'excuse my freedom, Miss, we might expect that she would receive my proposals with pleasure, and make such concessions in favour of her niece, as might engage my father's consent to our marriage: but since this is hopeless, is it reasonable that you should be the victim of her

‘her obstinacy? By seeming only to comply with your aunt’s desires, all obstacles to our union will be removed; a temporary compliance is all that is necessary to secure to you a fortune, and a rank in life suitable to your birth. Do not imagine that I wish to see you a profelyte to the religion she professes: no, if any thing could weaken my passion, your being capable of such a change, upon interested motives, would do it. I love you; I repeat it again, I love you for your piety.’

‘Then, to be sure, my lord,’ replied Henrietta, ‘you think that a little dissimulation in this case would be a virtue.’

‘In your circumstances,’ resumed Lord B——, ‘it certainly would; for while your principles are unchanged, what do you sacrifice, in yielding to your aunt, but externals only? This sacrifice your interest, your happiness, demands of you: let me add also, that you owe it to a man who loves you with the ardour I do. And surely, to industriously seek occasions of suffering for a religion, which, if you could be contented with secretly professing, you would be happy yourself, and make others happy also, is to give the world reason to suspect that ostentation has a greater share in your resolves than piety. Therefore, my dear Miss Courteney, you see it is not the sacrifice of your religion that I require of you, but of the reputation of suffering for it.’

‘Well, my lord,’ replied Henrietta, who had listened to him with great calmness, ‘if ever I was in doubt of your intentions, you have clearly explained them now: of them, and of the sentiments you have avowed, you may collect my opinion, when I declare to you, that if you had worlds to bestow on me, I would not be your wife.’

‘Is this your resolution, Miss Courteney?’ said his lordship.

‘It is, my lord,’ she replied: ‘a resolution justifiable upon your own great principle, interest. It is my interest I consult, when I prefer poverty and servitude to the fortune my aunt can give me; because the silent testimony of a quiet conscience is, in my opinion, of infinitely more value than riches. It is interest by which I am influenced, when I refuse your offered

alliance, because I am sure I could not be happy with a man whom I cannot esteem.’

‘Hold, Madam, hold,’ interrupted Lord B——, ‘this is too much: I have not deserved this treatment; but I thank you for it; yes, from my soul I thank you for it; it has helped to restore my senses. I have been foolish, very foolish, I confess.’

His lordship, indeed, looked foolish enough when he pronounced these words, which were succeeded by a pause of several minutes: then suddenly starting from his seat, and bowing with an affected negligence—

‘The best apology I can make, Madam,’ said he, ‘for the importunate visit I have paid you, is to assure you I never will repeat it.’

Henrietta curtsied gravely without answering him; and having rung the bell for a servant to attend him to the door, went into the room where her friend was sitting. Lord B—— stopped, looked back, and, finding she had withdrawn, he rushed out hastily, and flung himself into his chair, glad of his escape, and congratulating himself upon the victory he had gained over his passion; for, in the first emotions of his grief at parting, he had almost resolved to declare he would marry her without any fortune: but her disappearing so suddenly, gave him time for a moment’s reflection, and that was sufficient to hinder him from being guilty of an imprudence which he now trembled at the thoughts of.

It is so difficult for mean and selfish persons to conceive that any thing but private advantage can influence the resolutions of others, that, notwithstanding the proof Henrietta had given of her attachment to her religion, and her inviolable regard to truth, yet still Lord B—— supposed there must be some other latent motive for a conduct, in his opinion, highly ridiculous, and very inconsistent with that good sense which it was apparent she possessed.

Sometimes he fancied he had a rival; and then, to clear a doubt so tormenting, he was upon the point of returning to her, to offer her his hand upon her own conditions: but his avarice restrained him from making so dangerous a trial; she might accept his offer; and, with all the passion he felt for her, he could not resolve to marry her without a fortune.

To stifle a thought which suggested to him designs so destructive to his interest, he endeavoured to persuade himself that her obstinacy, in refusing to temporize a little when such mighty advantages were in view, was the effect of female vanity, which sought distinction at the expence of solid happiness. In this opinion he was confirmed by his friend, whom he had employed to sound the earl her uncle with regard to his proposals, and to whom he now communicated the result of his interview with Henrietta.

‘Depend upon it,’ said this sagacious person, ‘your goddess will descend from her romantick flights, when she finds she has almost soared out of human ken; and is much more likely to be laughed at for her extravagant folly, than admired and applauded for her extraordinary piety: Follow my advice,’ pursued he, ‘suffer your mistress to believe you have broke her chains; if interest does not make her wish to recal you, vanity will. Few women can endure that a lover should escape them; and, to recover their influence, they often make concessions, which, in the zenith of their power, they would have thought impossible.’

Lord B—— improved a little upon his friend’s scheme, and resolved to continue his addresses to Miss Cordwain, to pique Henrietta, he said; but, in reality, he was as much in love with her fortune, as with the person of our fair heroine; and was not willing to hazard the loss of the one, while it was yet doubtful whether he should ever possess the other.

CHAP. VII.

WHICH CONCLUDES THE FOURTH BOOK OF THIS HISTORY.

HENRIETTA having acquainted Mrs. Willis with what had passed in her interview with Lord B——, the good woman, who had flattered herself that the affair would have ended more happily (though more honourably it could not) for her fair friend, conjured her, with tears of anxious tenderness, not to think of going to service again, but to allow the countess, whom her conduct with regard to her son must necessarily oblige very highly, to employ her good offices with Lady Meadows in her fa-

vour, that a reconciliation might be effected, without those shocking conditions which had at first been proposed to her.

‘If I thought such an application would be successful,’ replied Henrietta, ‘I would readily consent to it. For you may easily imagine, my dear Mrs. Willis, that this low condition is not my choice: but I know my aunt’s temper; whatever she desires, she desires with ardour; and makes a merit of persisting obstinately in a resolution she has once formed. Her pride will be a more powerful advocate for me than any thing the countess can urge; to that I formerly owed my deliverance from dependence, more mortifying than servitude. This pride will no doubt be sensibly wounded, when she finds that I am determined in my choice; if any thing can make her recede from her purpose, it will be the shame of seeing her niece reduced so low. But surely it is not the way to convince her I am really determined, if I allow my friends to tease her with solicitations, when she has already declared her resolution in such strong terms: she will believe that I have engaged them to make this trial; she will be offended with their interposition, and perhaps be the less inclined to raise me from this obscure condition, as she will not have the merit of doing it from her own generosity and tenderness, but at the instances of others. Time only, my dear Mrs. Willis, can produce any favourable change in my circumstances; it will either soften the hearts of my relations, or it will blunt my sense of the meanness of my condition, by familiarizing me to it. This I am sure of at least, that, in the consciousness of doing right, I shall always find an unfailing source of happiness, however Providence may think fit to dispose of me.’

‘Ah, never doubt but you are the care of Providence, my dear Miss,’ cried Mrs. Willis: ‘such virtue and piety must sooner or later be happy; Heaven and your own prudence direct you.’

‘I have not always been prudent,’ said Henrietta, sighing; ‘but misfortunes, as you once told me, teach us wisdom.’

Mrs. Willis, observing an unusual pensiveness

pensiveness stealing over the sweet features of Henrietta on this reflection, changed the discourse to a less interesting subject, and employed her utmost assiduity and tenderness to make the time she stayed with her pass agreeably.

A week being elapsed, and no message coming from Lady D——, Henrietta began to apprehend that she should be disappointed of a place, in which she expected more satisfaction than she had found in those she had hitherto been in, when she was surprized with a visit from the Countess of ———.

She flew to receive her with respectful joy. The lady tenderly pressed her hand.

‘I had business in the city,’ said she, ‘and I took this opportunity to call on you—And how do you do, my dear good girl?’ pursued she, ‘have you any agreeable news to tell me? has your family relented yet?’

‘I have no reason to think they have,’ Madam, replied Henrietta.

‘Shocking insensibility!’ exclaimed the countess, lifting up her eyes; ‘you have been very ill used too by Mrs. Autumn, my sister tells me.’

Henrietta smiled, but was silent.

‘Well, Miss Courteney,’ resumed the countess, ‘will you come and live with me as my friend and companion? I know your generous scorn of dependence; but it is the unworthiness of the donor only, that can make benefits sit heavy on a mind like yours: there is often as much greatness of soul in receiving as in conferring benefits; and when true friendship is the motive for giving, it is pride, not generosity, to refuse.’

‘Do me the justice to believe, Madam,’ replied Henrietta, ‘that I receive this instance of your goodness with the deepest gratitude; but there is——’

‘I understand you,’ interrupted the countess—‘my son; but I hope, when he is married, you will have no objection to living with me as my friend.’

The countess, in speaking these words, looked earnestly on Henrietta.

‘No, certainly, Madam,’ cried she, eagerly; ‘I shall think myself happy in living with you in any situation.’

‘I know not what to think of my son’s conduct in this affair,’ resumed the countess; ‘every thing is settled be-

tween my lord and the young lady’s father; but he still finds pretences to delay the match.’ Her eyes, as she pronounced these words, seemed to demand an explanation of Henrietta.

‘I am afraid, Madam,’ replied she, ‘that I have been partly the cause of these delays.’

‘That is candidly said,’ interrupted the countess; ‘have you seen my son lately?’

‘I have, Madam,’ answered Henrietta; ‘but your ladyship may be entirely easy.’

‘Easy!’ repeated the countess; ‘why do you imagine that I am so insensible of your merit?—But you know, my good girl, Lord B—— is in honour engaged to Miss Cordwain.’

‘His lordship’s partiality for me,’ said Henrietta, ‘has induced him to carry this matter farther than (as he is circumstanced) I think he should have done. He has caused my uncle to be applied to; but this has produced nothing, Madam. I told Lord B—— upon what conditions my aunt had offered to settle her estate upon me; and his lordship is convinced that I cannot comply with them. My resolution is fixed, my Lord B—— knows it is so, and you have no hing to fear Madam, from any imprudence on his side, or any ungenerosity on mine. I ventured to promise that I would deserve the confidence you was pleased to place in me on this occasion, and I hope I have and shall continue to deserve it.’

Notwithstanding the delicate manner in which Henrietta stated the affair between her and Lord B——, yet the countess discovered that her son had shewn more prudence than generosity, or even love, in his behaviour; and, by a strange contradiction in the human heart, she at once approved and condemned, was pleased with, yet ashamed of his conduct; but, charmed with Henrietta’s noble disinterestedness, her candour and sincerity, she embraced her with the tenderness of a mother, and perhaps with the more tenderness because it was not likely she should be her mother.

‘I am impatient,’ said she, ‘till I can have you with me, that I may have it in my power to shew you how greatly I both love and esteem you.’

Henrietta thanked her with great politeness;

liteness; and then told her of Lady D——'s intentions to recommend her to a young lady, a relation of her's.

'Oh! Miss Belmour, you mean,' said the countess; 'my sister mentioned it to me: she is an agreeable young woman, has a very good fortune, and is entirely mistress of herself. She will be much better pleased to receive you in the character of a companion than a servant, when she knows your birth and merit.'

'I will owe obligations of that kind to none but yourself, Madam,' replied Henrietta; 'and I beg this young lady may know no more of me than what is just necessary to recommend me to her good opinion as a servant.'

The countess contested this point with her for some time; but finding her not to be dissuaded from her design, 'Well,' said she, kindly, 'you shall be indulged this once, but remember I claim your promise to come to me when a certain objection is removed; in the mean time we will settle you with Miss Belmour in the way you chuse. She will be with my sister to-morrow morning; and if you come likewise, Lady D—— will introduce you to her.'

Henrietta said she would not fail to attend Lady D——. Upon which the countess rose up, kissed her at parting, and desired she would look upon her as one of her most faithful friends.

Our fair heroine had reason to be satisfied with the kind manner in which Lady D—— recommended her to Miss Belmour, as well as with the reception that young lady gave her. She carried her home with her in her coach, and behaved to her with an affability that Henrietta could no otherwise account for, than by supposing the countess had discovered her true name and circumstances to her. In this, however, she was mistaken: her young mistress was in love; she had occasion for a confidant. Henrietta's youth and gentleness promised her she would be an indulgent one: besides, her good sense and the elegance of her person and behaviour so lessened the distance between the mistress and servant, that her pride was not wounded by the familiarity with which she condescended to treat her, as the necessary prelude to the confidence she was resolved to repose in her.

Henrietta listened with complaisance to the overflowings of a heart tender by

nature, and wholly possessed, as she thought, by a deserving object; but when Miss Belmour, in the course of frequent conversations on this exhaustless theme, gave her to understand that this lover of whom she boasted was the husband of another lady, from whom he had been parted several years, surprise, horror, grief, were so strongly impressed on her countenance, that her lady began to repent of a confession she had made, in full confidence that her sentiments, whatever they were, must needs be approved by her servant.

But it being now useless as well as dangerous to retract what she had said, she was under a necessity of submitting to the mortifying task of defending her conduct to one whose duty as well as interest she had a moment before conceived it to be, to acquiesce in, or rather applaud all she did.

She began with telling Henrietta, that Mr. Morley had, when very young, been forced, by an avaricious father, to marry a woman whom he could not love, and with whom he had been so miserable, that a separation was agreed to by the relations on both sides.

Henrietta sighed sympathetically at this account. Miss Belmour, encouraged by this mark of her sensibility, proceeded, with great fluency of language, to expatiate on the resistless power of love: her lover's sophistry had furnished her with arguments to prove, that the marriage he had been forced into was not binding in the sight of Heaven, and that he was at liberty to bestow his affections elsewhere. She treated marriage as a mere human institution, adopted the sentiments of Eloisa, talked of an union of hearts, eternal constancy, generous confidence. Henrietta heard her with patience; but being out of breath at last, she stopped, and seemed to expect a reply.

Our fair heroine, with all the humility becoming her station, but at the same time with all the firmness of virtue, opposed the specious arguments she had urged, with others which reason, religion, and the purity of her own sentiments, suggested to her: these, however, made very little impression on Miss Belmour. She yawned, smiled contemptuously, and was several times ready to interrupt her with an authoritative air, but refrained, from the consideration that her woman was now, by the participation of

her secret, become her companion, if not something more.

Henrietta, despairing to rescue her unhappy mistress, by motives of piety, from the snares that were laid for her, sought even to interest her passions in the cause of virtue.

'You depend, Madam,' pursued she, 'upon your lover's constancy; but what security can you have that he will be constant?'

'What security!' interrupted Miss Belmour, roused to attention by so interesting a question; 'his vows.'

'These vows, Madam,' said Henrietta, 'will expire with the passion that caused them: he will be constant as long as he loves, but how long he will love, is the doubt.'

'I am really vain enough to imagine,' replied Miss Belmour, briding, 'that those few attractions I have received from nature, since they have gained, will fix his heart: I am quite free from any apprehensions of that sort, I can assure you.'

'You have charms, Madam,' said Henrietta, 'that entitle you to a worthier conquest than of a man who, not having it in his power to marry you, yet dishonourably seeks to ensnare your affections.'

'It is natural to wish to be beloved by those we love,' replied Miss Belmour: 'I am convinced Mr. Morley loves me.'

'If he loved you sincerely, Madam,' said Henrietta, 'he would not make you unhappy; true love never seeks the ruin of its object: disinterestedness is the test of love; try Mr. Morley's by that.'

'Mr. Morley has no mean, selfish designs, upon my fortune,' cried Miss Belmour.

'His designs are mean and selfish in the highest degree,' replied Henrietta, 'since he expects that to make him happy you should sacrifice your peace, your honour, and your reputation; and should he succeed in these designs, which Heaven forbid, the neglect he will soon treat you with will convince you, that love, when not founded on esteem, cannot be lasting: for the contempt which even libertines feel for those whom they have seduced, is a proof of that secret homage which all men pay to virtue.'

'If I thought Mr. Morley would ever

fail in the respect and adoration he pays me now,' said Miss Belmour, 'I should hate him.'

'The only way to preserve that respect, Madam,' replied Henrietta, 'is not to allow him to encourage any presumptuous hopes: if you wish to keep his heart, engage his esteem; he may one time or other, perhaps, be at liberty to offer you his hand.'

'Ah, Henrietta!' interrupted Miss Belmour, sighing, 'that time is very distant, I fear: but you have put strange thoughts into my head; I have been to blame to suffer Mr. Morley to talk to me so freely of his passion: indeed I think he has been less respectful, since I suffered him to perceive that I preferred him to all the men I ever saw. I own to you freely, that it was my apprehensions of losing him that made me listen to his arguments; for I thought, if I reduced him to despair, he would conquer his passion for me: but what if the very means I have used to keep his heart, should prove the cause of his slighting me! Oh! you do not know what anxious, uneasy doubts, you have raised in my mind! However, I am resolved to behave with more reserve to him for the future. I will try whether his passion is strong enough to subsist of itself; for you have convinced me that the hopes with which I have hitherto fed it, have been less likely to nourish than to cloy.'

Henrietta would have been better pleased if sentiments more pure had suggested this design; but it was a great point gained to prevail with her on any terms to discourage the addresses of a man whose love was a crime. She flattered herself likewise that this unexpected severity in Miss Belmour would produce an alteration in her unworthy lover's behaviour, which might favour her views of exciting her resentment against him; and in this she was not mistaken.

Mr. Morley thought fit to be offended at the new plan of conduct Miss Belmour had laid down for herself, and complained of it at first with that mixture of haughtiness and submission which a man, who is sure he is beloved, thinks he has a right to use; but, finding this had not the effect he desired, he had recourse to a personated indifference, in order to alarm her with the fear of losing him.

Henrietta,

Henrietta, whom she acquainted with every change in his behaviour, told her that this was the time to humble her imperious lover. 'You must either give him laws, Madam,' said she, 'or be contented to receive them of him: his aim was to degrade you to a mistress; he will love you, you see, upon no other condition.'

'I see it! I see it plainly!' interrupted Miss Belmour, bursting into tears; 'where is now that awful love he professed for me, when a look, a smile, was a sufficient reward for all his sufferings!—Dear Henrietta, tell me what I shall do to shew him how much I hate and despise him.'

'Avoid him, Madam, as much as possible,' replied Henrietta. 'When you happen to meet him in company, suffer him not to speak to you apart, and receive no letters from him; persist in this conduct, and you will convince him that you are resolved not to purchase the continuance of his affection by the sacrifice of your honour. If he is capable of a sincere and generous passion, he will esteem and reverence that virtue which opposes his desires; and his esteem will strengthen his love.'

'Yes,' cried Miss Belmour, 'he shall find that he is not so sure of me as he has the presumption to imagine. I will tell him so myself, and see him again, but it shall be only to declare that I will never see him more. Give me pen and ink, my dear Henrietta: I will appoint him a meeting at Lady D——'s this evening; and while the company is engaged at cards, I shall have an opportunity to tell him the resolution I have formed, and doubt not but I will speak to him in the severest terms my resentment can suggest: he shall know, to his confusion, that I am in earnest.'

'Indeed, Madam,' said Henrietta, 'that is not the way to persuade him that you are in earnest; let your actions speak for you; shun him carefully, and then he must be convinced that you do not feign.'

'I have thought of a way to torment him,' said Miss Belmour, after a little pause; 'I will go to Paris. Last year some ladies of my acquaintance proposed to me to go there with them, and I had almost consented; but the wretch, who braves me so insolently now, de-

clared then that he could not support my absence, and seemed so overwhelmed with grief, that I put off my journey for that time: but now, were he to offer to stab himself at my feet, it should not alter my purpose. I will write to him this moment, and let him know my design.'

'Let me intreat you, Madam,' said Henrietta, 'not to do that; go first, and write to him afterwards—And yet I could recommend a better way of punishing this insolent lover.'

'Tell me what better way,' cried Miss Belmour, eagerly.

'It is to marry, Madam,' replied Henrietta. 'Chuse, out of that crowd of lovers who address you, him whom you think most deserving. Marriage will secure your peace, your honour, and reputation; and effectually punish the man, who made the sacrifice of all these the necessary condition of his love for you.'

This expedient was not at all approved of by Miss Belmour. She declared she hated the whole sex for Mr. Morley's sake; and Henrietta had no difficulty to believe her: however, she prevailed with her to promise that she would keep her intended journey secret till she was just ready to depart, that it might not seem as if she meant only to alarm her designing lover. This promise she observed so ill, that she declared that very day at Lady D——'s her intention to spend a few months in Paris. Mr. Morley, who was there, and who still kept up his assumed indifference, instead of endeavouring to alter her purpose, as she expected, coldly congratulated her on the pleasures she would enjoy in that enchanting metropolis. Miss Belmour came home ready to burst with rage and disappointment.

'I knew how it would be, Madam,' said Henrietta, 'if you talked of your design. Mr. Morley thinks he sees through the artifice of it: all you can do now is to hasten your departure.'

'I am resolved I'll set out to-morrow morning,' said Miss Belmour. 'No matter for preparations; pack up a few necessities to take with us in the coach, and leave directions for my trunks to be sent after. When we come to Dover, if there is not a packet-boat ready to sail, I'll hire one at any price: I shall not be at rest till I have convinced this man I am really determined to avoid him.'

Henrietta

Henrietta kept up this spirit; and after she had given proper directions to the housekeeper, and sent orders for the coach to be ready early in the morning, she busied herself in packing up, her lady assisting, in a violent flutter of spirits, and wishing impatiently for the hour of departure.

Our fair heroine had some objections to taking this journey herself, but her concern for Miss Belmour over-ruled them all. She was not willing to leave unfinished the good work she had begun; and she was apprehensive that, if the young lady was left to the guidance of her own passions, this sudden sally of resentment would end in a reconciliation fatal to her virtue.

She would have been glad to see the countess before she went, but there was no time for this visit; therefore she contented herself with writing to that lady, and to her friend Mrs. Willis. The countess received the news of this journey with great pleasure, because she hoped that absence would effectually cure her son's passion for Henrietta, the con-

sequences of which she was still apprehensive of, notwithstanding he had shewn an extraordinary prudence in the conduct of it.

But Mrs. Willis was very uneasy, lest any thing should happen that might make her repent the removing herself thus from all her friends, and putting herself entirely in the power of a stranger. Had there been time for it, she would have endeavoured to dissuade Henrietta from going; but, recollecting that Mr. Damer was in France, and that they might possibly meet, she resolved to write to the old gentleman, and give him a full account of every thing relating to the situation of his fair persecuted ward, not even omitting his son's doubtful behaviour with regard to her; for she knew that, if they met, Henrietta would be silent upon that article; and yet it was necessary he should know it, that he might be convinced her misfortunes were chiefly owing to his son's treachery; and this consideration, she hoped, would produce something to her advantage.



H E N R I E T T A.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAP. I.

CONTAINS AN ADVENTURE, IN WHICH OUR HEROINE IS MORE THAN ORDINARILY INTERESTED.



IN the mean time, our fair travellers, having regulated their affairs in the best manner the extreme hurry they were in would admit, set out for Dover in Miss Belmour's coach. That young lady, still agitated with the violence of her resentment, which Henrietta took care should not abate, and elated with the hope of reducing her lover to despair, by thus leaving him, thought the horses went too slow for her impatience. She wished for wings to convey her at once far from him, and declared that she never desired to see him more; yet Henrietta observed that she frequently looked out of the windows with an air of anxious expectation, and would sigh when she drew in her head again, as if she had been disappointed. Doubtless, she had conceived hopes that her lover would follow her; and, considering this neglect as a new proof of his indifference, it redoubled her rage, and strengthened a resolution in which reason and virtue had very little share.

This thought gave Henrietta extreme concern: her conversion promised no great permanency, since it was founded on such motives; but all she could now do was to manage her passions, for the time was not yet come to touch her heart by sentiments of piety and virtue.

On their arrival at Dover, they found the Calais packet-boat ready to sail. Miss Belmour, who would fain have lingered at Dover a day, was not much pleased with this circumstance, but her pride was concerned not to betray any irresolution: accordingly she embarked with a tolerable good grace; and the wind continuing fair, they soon landed at Calais.

Miss Belmour having made the journey before, was under no embarrassment how to conduct herself. She proceeded to the inn she had formerly been at; and having hired a post-chaise for herself and Henrietta, and a horse for her servant, she set out immediately after dinner, and reached Boulogne that evening.

As the chaise stopped at the inn they put up at, two gentlemen alighted at the same time; one of whom hearing they were English ladies, advanced, and respectfully offered them his hand to help them out. Miss Belmour, pleased with the graceful appearance of this stranger, politely accepted his assistance, which he likewise tendered to Henrietta, whose charms, at the first glance, made a powerful impresson on his heart.

His eyes told her this so intelligibly, that she was under some confusion; yet she found in herself a kind of satisfaction at the attention with which he gazed on her, and was now for the first time sensible to the pleasure of charming; but, accustomed to watch carefully over the motions of her own mind, she checked this rising vanity; and, a little ashamed of the folly she discovered in herself, she hastily withdrew her hand, which he still held, as not being master enough of him-
self

self to part with it, though she was already out of the chaise; and thanking him by a graceful curtsy for his civility, she followed Miss Belmour into the room the landlady had conducted her to.

The young gentleman stood gazing after her as long as she was in sight; then turning to his friend, who was giving some orders to their footmen—

‘Oh, Charles!’ cried he, with a look half serious, half gay, ‘my fatal hour is come!’

‘What! I’ll warrant you,’ said the other, ‘you are shot through the heart with the glances of the younger of those ladies; I observed how you gazed on her.’

‘Is she not a charming creature?’ exclaimed the first; ‘what features! what a complexion! what elegance in her whole form! I am sure she has wit; I saw her soul in her eyes.’

‘Faith! I am half concerned for you,’ interrupted Charles, with an affected seriousness: ‘this will be an unfortunate encounter, I am afraid.’

‘Can we not think of some method to introduce ourselves to them?’ cried the other, without minding what he had said: ‘I shall not rest till I find out who they are.’

‘What will it signify to you to know?’ replied Charles: ‘they are going to Paris, and we to London.’

‘Why, aye, that is true,’ said the other, ‘we shall go different ways in the morning; and yet—what think you, my dear Charles, of going back to Paris for a few days, and we shall have an opportunity of escorting these fair travellers?—Come, it will be but a frolick, and I know you are no enemy to them.’

‘I don’t like this frolick,’ replied Charles; ‘it has too serious an air: sure you are strangely charmed with this girl—just upon the point of seeing your father and your family, after a long absence, and so suddenly to resolve upon protracting your stay from them—I don’t half like it, I confess; and this once, my lord, I must oppose your inclinations.’

‘Oh, Sir, you are grave!’ replied his lordship, a little sullenly; ‘you have a mind to exert the governor too; but let me tell you, that, considering the equality of our years, and the terms we have hitherto lived upon, this wisdom is very unseasonable.’

—The young lord, having said this with some emotion, hastily entered the house; and calling to the inn-keeper to shew him a room, went away, without taking any farther notice of his governor, who stood musing for some time after he was gone, and then followed him, with an intention to bring him, if possible, to reason.

Upon his entering the room, he found his pupil leaning on a table, with a discontented air. He just raised his head, to see who it was that came in; and immediately resumed his former posture, without speaking a word.

The governor looked at him a moment in silence; at last—

‘This pensiveness,’ said he, ‘and this causeless resentment, are they not strong arguments against my complying with your proposal? The impression this girl has made on your heart must needs be very great, since it can make you already forget that friendship you have vowed for me, and in which I placed so much happiness.’

‘It is you, not I, who seem to have forgot our mutual friendship,’ replied the young nobleman, melted at those last words: ‘Why did you, my dear Charles, lose the beloved friend and companion in the austere governor? is not this strange affectation!’

‘Indeed, my lord,’ replied the governor, ‘I should be unworthy the title of your friend, if I was not attentive to your interest.’

‘Was there ever any thing so absurd,’ interrupted his lordship, ‘to make a serious affair of a little idle curiosity!’

‘Don’t you make a serious affair of it,’ replied the governor, ‘and I shall be contented.’

‘Well, then, you consent to go back to Paris with me,’ said the pupil.

‘If you are resolved to go,’ answered the governor, ‘to be sure I will go with you.’

‘Now you are my friend again,’ said the young lord, hugging him: ‘I promise you, I will not stay long in Paris; but, we must be Freeman and Melvil once more, my dear Charles.—Ah, how many pleasant adventures have we had under those names!’

‘If this proves of no greater consequence,’ resumed the young governor, ‘I shall not regret coming into your scheme; but I confess I am alarmed
at



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'at your eagerness to follow this young woman. She seems to have made no slight impression on your heart: there is danger in these sort of attachments; how do you know how far this may lead you?'

'What strange notions have entered your head!' said the young nobleman; 'it is hardly worth while to make a serious answer to them: but this you may depend upon, that I never will follow my inclinations in opposition to the duty I owe my father. And now, what do you think will become of this dangerous attachment? But,' added he, smiling, 'we must make our fellow-travellers a visit; these inns are charming places for shortening the ceremonies of a first introduction.' He rang the bell, without waiting for his friend's answer; and, one of his servants appearing, he ordered him to present Mr. Freeman's and his compliments to the two English ladies, with a request that they would permit them to wait upon them.

Henrietta felt her heart flutter at this message; yet her natural reserve made her with Miss Belmour would decline the visit of these young gentlemen. However, that lady returned a civil answer, and permission for them to come.

Henrietta, sensible of an agitation which she had never known before, would have chosen not to have shared this visit; but it was not possible to avoid it. Miss Belmour had obliged her to throw off the character of a servant, and to live with her upon the footing of a friend and companion; to which Henrietta was induced to consent, by the hope she had, that this familiarity would furnish her with opportunities to guard her unhappy mistress against the evils into which her blind passion was hurrying her.

To this mark of consideration and esteem Miss Belmour added a most affectionate behaviour, which entirely won the heart of the tender and grateful Henrietta: for nothing so much resembles true friendship, as those connections which lovers form with persons whom they make the confidants of their passion.

Thus circumstanced, Henrietta was obliged to receive the compliments of Mr. Melvil and his friend, as well as

her lady; who, soon after, fell into a fit of musing, that made it necessary for our fair heroine to keep up the conversation with the two gentlemen, which she did with that sprightliness and vivacity so natural to her.

The graces of her wit, the easy elegance of her manners, and the modest dignity of her deportment, formed new chains for the heart of Melvil. He looked on his friend with an exulting air: his eyes challenged his admiration of the woman, whose merit justified the sentiments he entertained for her.

At parting, he told the ladies, that, since he was going to Paris, as well as they, he hoped they would allow him the pleasure of escorting them; and that he would regulate his journey entirely by theirs.

Henrietta, who well remembered to have seen these travellers taking the very contrary route, was a little surprised at this declaration; but Miss Belmour, absorbed in her own reflections, was wholly ignorant of that circumstance; and, considering this offer in no other light than that of general politeness, she received it with her usual complaisance.

The youth and beauty of the two ladies made their apparent independent situation a matter of curiosity to Mr. Freeman, as well as the profound melancholy in which one of them seemed buried.

Melvil was little concerned in these enquiries: all his thoughts were taken up with the perfections he found in her who had charmed him; and he was much less solicitous to discover who she was, than how to make himself agreeable to her. He found she was not married, by the other lady's giving her the title of Miss when she spoke to her; and he was perfectly satisfied with this knowledge. Conscious of the ardour with which he already loved this fair stranger, he was apprehensive of awakening the fears of his friend, by dwelling too long on her praises; but he received the testimony, which Freeman could not help giving to her merit, with such an undisguised transport, as drew from him some serious admonitions, which he rallied off with a sprightly air, and then changed the discourse to a less interesting subject.

CHAP. II.

WHICH SHEWS THAT IT IS EASIER
TO BE WISE FOR OTHERS THAN
OURSELVES.

THOUGH Miss Belmour's melancholy had hindered her from taking any great share in the conversation during this visit, yet her mind was still free enough to observe, that Henrietta had made an impression upon the heart of Mr. Melvil. She congratulated her, smiling, upon her conquest; nor did her raillery even spare her: for Henrietta, who, for a full hour, had appeared animated with an extraordinary vivacity, became all on a sudden pensive and silent. This change exactly commenced at the time Mr. Melvil went away; but she did not perceive it herself, and started, as from a dream, when Miss Belmour reproached her with it.

Concerned that she had given room for a suspicion of this nature, she began, as soon as she was alone, to examine her own heart. 'Miss Belmour had praised the personal graces of Mr. Melvil, and it was but justice to own, that he was eminently handsome; but was she weak enough to be dazzled with the beauty of a man? No, certainly; his countenance pleased her, because it was a picture of his mind; candour, sweetness, benevolence, shined in every feature: the politeness of his address, his gentle manners, that air so noble, yet so peculiarly soft and engaging, his good sense, and, above all, the justness and purity of his sentiments, which she had time enough to discover during their conversation; were not these qualities which a modest young woman might esteem? and is love a necessary consequence of esteeming one of that sex? Must she deny herself the pleasure of approving virtue and merit, for fear of loving it too much?' It was thus she argued, and soon dispelled those doubts which Miss Belmour's raillery had raised in her mind.

While Henrietta, under the notion of barely esteeming what was indeed truly worthy of esteem, was insensibly giving way to more tender sentiments, Mr. Melvil, who loved with all the tenderness and ardour of a first passion, as his really was, burned with impatience for the hour when they were to join the fair

travellers. Freeman directed his attention to Miss Belmour, which gave the young lover an opportunity of employing his whole care and assiduity about his mistress, who ascribed all to his natural politeness, and remained in a perfect tranquillity, as well with regard to his sentiments as her own. Miss Belmour's experience, however, soon let her into the secret of their hearts. Melvil's passion was indeed apparent enough, notwithstanding the pains he was at to conceal it, through fear of his friend's troublesome remonstrances; but Henrietta's, though hid from herself, was open to Miss Belmour's discerning eyes, and she exulted in the discovery.

This rigid censurer of her conduct, this inflexibly virtuous maid, was entangled in the snares of love. She perceived that she herself was ignorant of her own danger, and she was resolved not to draw her out of this false security by any unseasonable railleries: for, however useful the strict principles of Henrietta had been to her, yet she could not bear the superiority they gave her; and she rejoiced in the hope, that a passion, perhaps as unfortunately placed as her own, would reduce her to an equality with her.

Their journey now drew near a period: Melvil trembled at the thoughts of parting; he had indeed laid the foundation of an intimacy with the two ladies, which would give him a right to visit them in Paris; but he had been used to see the object of his passion continually, from the first moment of his acquaintance with her: and although they never separated till the evening, yet he thought the time amazingly long till they met again. How then would he be able to support an absence of two or three days, which decorum would oblige him to make the interval of his visits? besides, she was still ignorant of the sentiments she had inspired him with. Hitherto he had never found an opportunity of speaking to her alone; but, if one should offer, how could he declare himself to a woman, for whom he felt as much respect as love? yet one, whose birth he was ignorant of, who seemed to be in a dependent situation, whom he could not think of marrying, and whom he durst not wish to seduce.

The difficulties he could not remove he endeavoured to banish from his thoughts; and, without considering what

must be the event of the passion he was thus indulging, he for the present confined all his wishes to the pleasure of seeing her.

Miss Belmour had often wondered that this young lover shewed so little solicitude to make opportunities of speaking to his mistress in private. She could not impute this behaviour to want of ardour; every look he gave her was expressive of the tenderness his soul was filled with: it was then respect, it was awe, it was fear of offending, that laid him under this restraint. How glorious this for Henrietta! how humiliating for her, who had scarce escaped falling a sacrifice to the dishonourable attempts of her lover! Was she then less capable of inspiring a respectful passion than her woman? or did her charms act more powerfully on the heart she had subdued, than those of Henrietta? This question her self-love easily decided; and, from the same sentiment, she was persuaded that Henrietta, with all her boasted virtue, would defend herself as weakly against the lover her inclinations declared for, as she had done. Her present triumph, she thought, was less owing to her own strength than her lover's weakness, who had not yet made a formal attack upon her heart: curiosity to know what effect the declaration of his passion would have, made her resolve to give him an opportunity of speaking to her in private. They were now within a day's journey of Paris. On their arrival at the house where they were to dine, Mr. Freeman, as usual, went to give orders for their entertainment, and left Melvil with the two ladies. Miss Belmour, pretending that she had a mind for some particular dish, ran after him, and kept him in conversation, that he might not interrupt the lovers, who being now for the first time alone together, were both equally embarrassed.

Henrietta cast down her eyes, surprised at the confusion in which she found herself, and shocked at the intelligence this new emotion gave her of the true state of her heart. Mr. Melvil approached her trembling; he could not resolve to lose so favourable an opportunity of declaring his sentiments to her: but the natural goodness and rectitude of his mind suggesting to him, that it was a kind of fraud to seek encouragement of a passion, the design of which he was not

himself able to answer for, he remained a few moments in suspense.

This silence increased Henrietta's embarrassment; but suddenly reflecting upon the advantage it gave Mr. Melvil over her, she turned her eyes towards him, with a look, in which she endeavoured to throw as much indifference as possible, but which, nevertheless, had an unusual coldness in it; so that Melvil, partly withheld by his extreme delicacy, and partly by the awe which this severe glance inspired him with, dropped, for that time, all thoughts of declaring his passion, and immediately entered into an indifferent conversation.

Henrietta seemed as if relieved from a painful load; her countenance resumed its former sweetness, and she talked to him with her usual vivacity: yet Miss Belmour, at her return, saw some remains of her late uneasiness in her eyes; she observed, too, that she spoke less to Mr. Melvil, and more to his friend, than she did before; that she studiously avoided the looks of the former; and that her behaviour to him was less free and obliging than it used to be. All this she looked upon as the play of coquetry; and in Mr. Melvil's apparent melancholy she saw its purpose and effect.

But Henrietta, taught by what passed in her own heart during the few moments she was alone with Mr. Melvil, that she not only considered him as a lover, but a lover formidable by his engaging qualities, resolved not to strengthen her prepossession in his favour, by continuing to see and converse with him. Lord B——'s behaviour had given her no high idea of the disinterestedness of men. She trembled at her own imprudence, in so far forgetting the humble station that Providence had placed her in, as to entertain sentiments of tenderness for a man, who, from the inequality there was between them, might think himself authorised to form expectations injurious to her honour: though her weakness was so lately known to herself, yet she fancied it had been perceived by others before, and that even Mr. Melvil had discovered the preference with which she regarded him. It was this thought which made her so suddenly alter her behaviour; but as indifference is, of all dispositions of the mind, the hardest to feign, Melvil imputed the apparent constraint in her manner to some disgust he

had unhappily given her, and Miss Belmour to the artifice of a coquet.

Henrietta, who was far from imagining she over-acted her part, continued, during the whole time they were at dinner, to avoid her lover's looks, so carefully, that he had no opportunity to make her comprehend by them, how much he was concerned at her extraordinary coldness. However, she could not, without affectation, refuse him her hand when they left the inn; but they followed Mr. Freeman and Miss Belmour so close, that it was not possible for him to speak to her without being overheard; and he in vain sought her eyes: they were always directed another way. He sighed when he helped her into the chaise; and if she had not turned her face from him that moment, the blush with which it was overspread, would have shewn him that she took but too much notice of that sigh.

'You are melancholy, Henrietta,' said Miss Belmour, after looking at her in silence for a long time, attentive to the motions of her mind, which might be easily read in her countenance.

'Am I, Madam?' replied she, with a sigh half suppressed, and a gentle smile.

'Yes, indeed, are you,' resumed Miss Belmour, mimicking the languid accent in which she spoke; 'and I don't remember that I ever saw you so before.'

'And yet I have many causes for melancholy, Madam,' replied Henrietta, whose heart was full, and she eagerly grasped at this opportunity to relieve herself by tears; tears, which she supposed she gave to the remembrance of her misfortunes, without asking herself, why that remembrance was more poignant now than before.

'Ah! Henrietta,' said Miss Belmour, shaking her head, 'your heart has undergone a great change within these few days. You are in love, my dear.'— 'Is it possible, Madam,' cried Henrietta, hastily, her fair face all crimsoned over, 'that you have discovered?— Do you think that?— Then, to be sure, Mr. Melvil—' She stopped abruptly, and cast down her eyes: the mention of that name seemed to lead her to a consciousness, that she had betrayed herself. Miss Belmour was affected with her beautiful simplicity. 'Don't be ashamed, my dear Henrietta,' said she, taking her hand, 'to speak freely to me. From

'me,' added she, sighing, 'you may be sure of indulgence.'

'No, Madam, no,' interrupted Henrietta, with great earnestness, 'I would not seek indulgence for my weaknesses; but I conjure you, Madam,' pursued she, with tears that, in spite of her endeavours, would force their way, 'suffer me to return to that humble station, from which your partial kindness raised me. You have made me forget I was a servant. It does not become me to view with sensibility the merit of persons so greatly above me. But you shall find, Madam, that I will repair this error, and that my conduct shall be such as may render me not unworthy your esteem.'

Notwithstanding the delicate turn which Henrietta gave to a declaration, which shewed she was determined early to conquer her passion, yet Miss Belmour considered it as a triumph over her, who had not been capable of acting with equal prudence.

'It is happy for you,' said she, coldly, 'that you need no assistance to help you to keep your passions in subjection; but I owe you too many obligations for the good counsel you have given me, to permit you to appear in any other character than that of my friend.'

Henrietta's mind was in so much agitation, that she did not take in the full sense of this answer; but, struck with the obliging purport of the last words of it, she expressed her gratitude in terms full of tenderness and respect.

The sight of Paris drew them both out of a long silence, which had succeeded a conversation with which neither had been pleased: Henrietta, because it had discovered so much weakness on her side; Miss Belmour, because it had shewn so little.

Their chaise, as Miss Belmour had directed, stopped at the house of her banker in Paris. The two gentlemen were already at the side it. Mr. Melvil, as if he was afraid Henrietta would refuse him her hand, seized it with trembling haste; and, as he led her into the house, ventured to press it with his lips, unperceived by any one else. Henrietta, imputing this boldness to the discovery he had made of her sentiments, pulled her hand away hastily, giving him a look at the same time that expressed her resentment; but all her anger could not prevent

prevent her from being affected with the soft languor that appeared in his face, and the submissive manner in which he had yielded to the effort she made to withdraw her hand.

Miss Belmour, at parting, told them, she hoped to see them again in a day or two, when she should be settled. Her Parisian friend soon procured her convenient lodgings; and, at her desire, recommended to her a *Femme de Chambre*, among the other servants he provided her; which Henrietta in vain opposed; but, fixed in her design to avoid Mr. Melvil, she took care to be seldom in the way when he came.

Miss Belmour blamed her for this conduct. 'You will make the man think you love him, and are afraid of him,' said she, 'by flying him.'

'If I loved him, Madam,' replied Henrietta, blushing, 'is it not prudence to avoid him?'

'Why, I don't know,' said Miss Belmour; 'Mr. Melvil certainly loves you; and, whatever inequality there may be in your conditions, yet love is a great leveller; he may possibly intend to marry you.'

'It is not fit I should suppose he has any such design, Madam,' resumed Henrietta, 'since it is highly improbable; and I will not expose myself to the danger of being deceived. I have somewhere read,' added she, smiling, 'that in love flight is victory; and this way at least I shall be sure to conquer.'

Miss Belmour, who knew how difficult it was to be in love and be wise, laughed at a resolution, which she did not think it would be always in her power to maintain. Poor Henrietta, who had so artlessly laid open her heart, was often exposed to the most poignant raillery from her; but at length she was delivered from this kind of persecution by a surprising alteration in Miss Belmour herself.

This young lady, who had fled from her lover, rather with a hope of stimulating his passion than of subduing her own, though she endeavoured to impose upon herself in believing the latter to be the true motive of her conduct, fell into a most violent despair, when she found that, far from following her, he did not even seek a reconciliation by writing to her. Sick of herself, the world, and tired of her existence, she mistook the agitations

of a heart tortured by jealousy, disappointment, and the pangs of slighted love, for the motions of grace, and the genuine marks of repentance. She neglected her dress, took no pleasure in any amusement, avoided company, and spent whole hours in her closet, where she wept and prayed by turns.

She told Henrietta, that the world and all its pleasures were grown insipid to her; that her whole soul was filled with divine love; and that the thoughts and exercises of religion made up all her happiness. She then passionately regretted that there were no religious communities among the Protestants, where a mind that was weaned from this sublunary world, and all its vanities, might freely indulge its pious contemplations, and devote itself entirely to Heaven. 'Oh, how happy are the nuns!' she exclaimed; 'how I envy them! Sure nothing can be more delightful, when persons are truly pious, than to live in a religious society excluded from all commerce with a world they must certainly despise. I think I should be perfectly contented if I was in a cloister.'

Henrietta congratulated her upon her new sentiments, but endeavoured to prove that there was more merit in passing through life with innocence, and in rightly performing all its duties, than in flying to the gloomy solitude of a cloister, where virtue is secured by bolts and bars, and the exercises of religion performed as a penance. She recommended to her the study of the Scriptures, and put some practical treatises of religion, written by the best authors, into her hands: but the zeal of this new convert was so flaming, that nothing would serve her but a total retirement from the world; and she made such frequent visits to a convent, where a friend of hers had lately taken the veil, that Henrietta was apprehensive the nuns would discover the true state of her mind, and take advantage of her passions to pervert her principles, and secure her to themselves.

While these whims possessed her, she was so inaccessible to all visitors, that Mr. Melvil could with difficulty get admittance. Freeman saw the progress of his passion with great uneasiness; and, finding that he could not be prevailed upon to leave Paris, resolved to write to his father, and give him a hint of the dangerous

gerous attachment his son had formed, that he might send him a peremptory command to return to England: but, before he could execute this design, Melvil, to his great surprize, told him, that he would leave Paris in two days. The poor youth expected his friend would have expressed some joy at this news; and being disappointed at his receiving with indifference what had cost him so many pangs to resolve upon—

‘You make me no compliments,’ said he, with a tender smile, ‘upon the conquest I have gained over my inclinations: do you think I can banish myself from Miss Benson without concern?’

‘I am sure I cannot hear you speak in this manner without concern,’ replied Freeman. ‘Is it fit for a young man of your rank to entertain a serious liking for a woman, to whose birth and character you are an absolute stranger?’

‘There is not a man in the world,’ resumed Melvil, eagerly; ‘who need to blush for loving Miss Benson: her person, beautiful as it is, is the least of her charms; that mingled sweetness and dignity in her manners, that graceful modesty which distinguishes every word and action of hers, exalts her above all the women I have ever seen. You have heard her talk, and you could not help owning that you thought her very sensible.’

‘Well, but what is all this to the purpose?’ interrupted Freeman; ‘what signifies attributing such goddess-like perfections to an obscure girl, whom, if you were at liberty to dispose of yourself, you would not, I suppose, be so mad as to marry? Your fortune enables you to make other proposals, less unworthy of yourself, though advantageous enough for a young woman in her dependent situation. Own freely, then, that this is your intention.’

‘May I perish,’ replied Melvil, with some emotion, ‘if I would degrade such excellence to a mistress; but, if I were capable of such a design, her virtue, I am sure, is incorruptible. Have you not observed with what care she shuns me? She knows I love her; but she knows not with what purity I love her; and, conscious of her situation, she is afraid I should take advantage of it to declare myself in a manner that would wound her delicacy.—Charming crea-

ture! I love her! I adore her!—Indeed, my dear Freeman, it is time to be gone.’

‘I see it plainly,’ replied Freeman; ‘you are grown quite romantick. We will set out to-morrow, if you please; for, with the strange notions you have entertained, I think you ought not to trust yourself here any longer.’

The lover consented with a sigh; but, at the same time, put his friend in mind, that civility obliged them to go and take leave of the ladies. Freeman could not reasonably oppose his making this visit; and, after he had given proper directions to the servants for their journey the next day, he accompanied him to Miss Belmour’s lodgings.

CHAP. III.

IN WHICH MISS BELMOUR ACTS
THE PART OF A TRUE FEMALE
FRIEND.

THEY found the two ladies together. Henrietta could not, without affectation, avoid her lover that day, as she was in the room when he came in; and he, who had not been so fortunate for several days before, found so much delight in looking at her and hearing her speak, that he forgot he came to pay a farewell visit; which Mr. Freeman observing, took care to mention their design of leaving Paris the next day.

Melvil’s gaiety was immediately overcast, Henrietta turned pale, Freeman was attentive to his friend’s emotions, and only Miss Belmour had freedom of mind enough left to speak. She said some civil things upon the occasion, which Freeman answered; for Melvil continued silent, with his eyes fixed upon Henrietta, who had bent hers towards the ground: conscious of the emotion with which she had heard the news of their intended departure, she durst not look up, lest the person, from whom she was most solicitous to hide her concern, should read it too plainly in her countenance.

Recovering herself at length, upon Miss Belmour’s taking occasion to thank them anew for the civilities she had received from them during their journey from Calais, she added a few words to her compliment; but, in doing so, her eyes slightly glanced over Mr. Melvil, and

and directed their looks full upon his friend.

The conversation was dull enough during two hours that they stayed; and Freeman, perceiving the young gentleman wanted resolution to put an end to the visit, rose up first: Mr. Melvil rose likewise, though with apparent reluctance; and having saluted Miss Belmour, approached Henrietta, trembling. She turned pale and red successively; a soft sigh stole from her. Melvil was in too much emotion to observe hers: he saluted her with an air of solemn respect; but, as she retired a step back, a sudden impulse, which he could not resist, made him take her hand; he pressed it to his lips with passionate tenderness, and, sighing, quitted the room with the utmost precipitation.

Henrietta's eyes overflowed; she made haste to wipe them before Miss Belmour, who attended the gentlemen as far as the door of her anti-chamber, returned.

'Ah! my poor Henrietta,' said that young lady, who perceived she had been weeping, 'I pity you! What sordid wretches are these men! Melvil loves you, and yet he is able to leave you; nay, I am persuaded he has discovered your tenderness for him. What monstrous ingratitude! You ought to hate him, my dear.'

'You bid me hate him, Madam,' replied Henrietta, smiling, 'yet say every thing that can confirm me in a favourable opinion of him. If he loves me, and has seen any weakness in me, he gives the best proof of his love in not seeking to take advantage of that weakness.'

Miss Belmour, who thought this a strange way of reasoning, answered no otherwise than by a significant smile, which seemed to say, she was resolved to justify him at any rate; while Henrietta, finding in her lover's behaviour a delicacy which agreeably flattered her esteem of him, cherished his remembrance with a tender grief, and, perhaps, for the first time, repined at her unhappy fortune, which had placed such a distance between them.

As soon as the two gentlemen had left the ladies lodgings, Melvil, who found himself very low-spirited, proposed to his friend to spend the evening at a noted Hotel, with some young Englishmen of fashion, who were newly arrived. Freeman consented; but observed with un-

easefulness, that his pupil, who till then had been remarkably abstemious, pushed about the bottle with great velocity, and could not be persuaded to go home till the night was far advanced.

Mr. Freeman saw him in bed, and then retired to his own chamber, full of apprehensions lest this sudden intemperance should have any bad effect on his health. As soon as it was light, he went to his bed-side, and found him with all the symptoms of a feverish disorder upon him, to which the agitations of his mind had contributed more, perhaps, than the liquor of which he had drank so freely.

All thoughts of their journey were now laid aside; physicians were sent for, who pronounced that he was dangerously ill: Freeman, full of anxiety, sat close to his bed, holding one of his burning hands tenderly pressed between his. He heard him sigh frequently; and from thence took occasion to ask him, if any secret uneasiness occasioned his indisposition?

The young gentleman attributed his illness entirely to the excess he had been guilty of the night before; but his fever increasing, he grew delirious, and then the name of Miss Benson was continually in his mouth.

Freeman, judging by these ravings of the deep impression this young woman had made on the heart of his pupil, blamed himself for so obstinately opposing his passion; and, judging from Henrietta's situation that she would not refuse to listen to such proposals as his fortune enabled him to make her, he resolved to attempt something in his friend's favour.

His curiosity having led him to make some enquiries concerning Miss Belmour of several persons that had lately arrived from England, he found she had but a doubtful character; her connections with Mr. Morley having exposed her to great censure. Of her companion he could learn nothing; but, concluding from the friendship there appeared to be between them, that she was her confidant in this amour, he flattered himself that she would not be a very difficult conquest.

He shut his eyes upon all that was wrong in this proceeding; and, considering nothing but the interest of his friend, for whom he had the most passionate concern, he thought it less dangerous to give him a mistress, than to trust him to the fantastick power of his passion, which might

might hurry him on to a clandestine marriage.

The young gentleman was in a few days entirely out of danger from the fever; but his sighs, and the pensive air of his countenance, shewed that his mind was not at ease.

'If you were able to go abroad,' said Freeman to him, 'we would visit our English ladies once more before we leave Paris. They imagine we are in London by this time, and will be strangely surprized to see us again.'

'Then they do not know I have been ill,' replied Mr. Melvil.

'Not yet,' said Freeman; 'but if you wish they should know, I will wait on them this afternoon, and tell them what has kept us in Paris so much longer than we intended.'

Melvil affected to receive this proposal with indifference; but his friend observed that he was more cheerful than before, and doubted not but he expected the news of his illness would have some effect on Henrietta.

He went at the usual hour, and was immediately admitted. 'You are in Paris still, then?' exclaimed Miss Belmour, in a joyful accent, as soon as Freeman entered her apartment. 'I am excessively glad of it; I hope your agreeable friend is with you.'

Freeman, a little disappointed at not seeing Henrietta with her, answered coldly, that Mr. Melvil had been indisposed, which obliged them to delay their journey.

'I fancy,' said Miss Belmour, with an arch leer, 'that the air of Paris is mighty necessary for your friend at this time; you are in the wrong to hurry him away.'

'You have a great deal of penetration, Madam,' replied Mr. Freeman, smiling; 'you have guessed the cause of his illness, I believe.'

'I believe I have,' resumed Miss Belmour; 'and perhaps I could tell him something that might contribute to forward his recovery.'

Freeman began now to think his scheme was in a hopeful way. 'To be sincere with you, Madam,' said he, with a graver look and accent, 'Mr. Melvil is desperately in love with Miss Benson.'

'Poor man!' cried Miss Belmour, laughing, 'he is to be pitied truly, for

Miss Benson is most desperately in love with him likewise.'

'How happy would this news make him!' exclaimed Freeman. 'Am I, Madam, at liberty to tell him?'

'Certainly,' replied Miss Belmour; 'I told you for that purpose; and now what do you think of my frankness?'

'I adore you for it, Madam,' said Freeman, taking her hand, which (encouraged by her behaviour) he kissed with great liberty. 'Ah!' pursued he, looking at her tenderly, 'what additional charms does kindness give to beauty!'

'I hear Miss Benson on the stairs,' said Miss Belmour, withdrawing her hand; 'I will give you an opportunity to plead your friend's cause: remember what I have told you, and don't be discouraged by a little affectation.'

She stopped upon Henrietta's entrance, who started at the sight of Mr. Freeman, and immediately after her fair face was covered with blushes.

'You see we have not lost our good friends yet,' said Miss Belmour. Henrietta only smiled. 'I must desire you, my dear,' pursued that young lady, 'to entertain Mr. Freeman; I ordered some trades-people to attend me about this time.'

She hurried out of the room when she had said this, not without some confusion for the part she had acted; to account for which, it is necessary the reader should know that the mind of this young lady had undergone another revolution, within the few days of Mr. Melvil's illness.

A letter from her lover, filled with tender complaints, and new assurances of everlasting fidelity, had banished all thoughts of devotion and a convent. She had answered it immediately, without communicating it to Henrietta; her transport at finding herself still beloved, and the fear of disgusting him by any new coldness, hurried her on to the most fatal resolutions. She invited him to come to Paris to her; and, not doubting but he would instantly obey her summons, she was now only solicitous how to reconcile Henrietta to her conduct, and oblige her to keep her secret.

The unexpected news of Mr. Melvil's being still in Paris, and Mr. Freeman's acknowledgment of his friend's passion for Henrietta, answered all her views. She

She imputed the reserve Henrietta had been enabled to maintain, less to her own virtue than to the unenterprising temper of her lover; and was persuaded that the discovery she had made of her tenderness for him, would put the affair upon such a footing, as to make her less rigid in her remonstrances with respect to Mr. Morley.

CHAP. IV.

WHICH CONTAINS A VERY INTERESTING DISCOVERY.

FREEMAN, though persuaded that Miss Belmour was a woman of intrigue, and by consequence entertaining no elevated idea of her companion, found himself so awed by the modesty that shone in her countenance, and the dignity of her person and manner, that he was at some loss how to introduce the subject which had brought him thither. Henrietta, however, innocently led him to it, by expressing her surprize to see him still in Paris.

'You say nothing of my friend, Madam,' said Freeman; 'and this indifference with regard to him is a very bad omen.'

'I hope Mr. Melvil is well,' said Henrietta, gravely, without seeming to take any notice of the strange speech he had made.

'He is better than he was three or four days ago,' replied Freeman, 'when his physicians despaired of his life.'

'Bless me!' cried Henrietta, with an emotion she could not suppress, 'has Mr. Melvil been so ill then? I am extremely concerned to hear it.'

'You would, no doubt,' said Freeman, 'be more concerned if you knew you were the cause.'

'This kind of raillery, Mr. Freeman,' replied Henrietta, a little confused, 'is not at all agreeable to me, I assure you.'

'By Heaven I am serious,' resumed Freeman; 'my friend loves you with the utmost ardour: I am a witness to the birth and progress of his passion, and to his fruitless endeavours to conquer it. The effort he made to leave Paris has almost cost him his life; he was taken ill the evening before our intended departure. Oh, Miss Benson! had you heard with what tenderness he

'called upon your name, when the violence of his fever had deprived him of his senses, I am sure you must have pitied him.'

Freeman perceived, by the changes in Henrietta's countenance, that she did not hear him without emotion. He paused, in expectation of some pretty affected answer, that would give hope while it seemed to destroy it; but Henrietta, with a composed look and accent, replied—

'If I am to believe this account of your friend's illness not exaggerated, permit me to ask you, Sir, what is your design by making me acquainted with his sentiments, and what you expect from me upon this occasion?'

Freeman was a little disconcerted by this speech, and at the manner in which she delivered it; but, relying on the intelligence he had received from Miss Belmour—

'I expect you will have compassion on my friend,' said he, 'and give him an opportunity to declare to you himself the passion you have inspired him with.'

'I will be very free with you, Mr. Freeman,' replied Henrietta; 'your ready concurrence with your friend in the liking you say he has entertained for me, is not consistent with your good sense and prudence. Mr. Melvil is a young man of rank and fortune; I am poor and dependent; my birth, perhaps, greatly inferior to his. Will his parents, think you, approve of such a choice?'

'What have parents to do with a tender engagement?' interrupted Freeman; 'an engagement in which the heart only is consulted.'

'Were my heart ever so well disposed in favour of your friend,' resumed Henrietta, not willing to understand him, 'I would not receive his addresses without the sanction of his parents consent.'

Freeman could hardly help smiling at this formal declaration; and, supposing that the best way to drive these strange notions out of her head, was to acquaint her with Melvil's quality, which he likewise expected would have no small influence over her—

'It is not fit,' said he, 'that you should be any longer ignorant of the rank of him whom your charms have subjected. Melvil is not the name of
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‘ my friend; he is the heir of an illustrious title and a great estate: he loves you, he will make your fortune; do not throw away this opportunity of freeing yourself from poverty and dependence, nor let a romantick notion of virtue deprive you of the advantages that are offered you.’

‘ Hold, Sir,’ interrupted Henrietta, rising from her chair, ‘ this insult is too plain; I ought not to have listened to you so long.’ She spoke this with tolerable composure; but, finding her tears begin to flow, she turned aside to conceal them, and hastily wiping her eyes, she looked on him again with a kind of calm disdain.

‘ I know not,’ said she, ‘ what weakness you have discovered in my behaviour, to encourage you to make me such shocking proposals; but I may venture to tell you, though I am not the mistress of this apartment, that the doors of it shall never be open to you again.’

She was hurrying out of the room when she had spoke this, leaving Freeman in so much confusion, that he knew not what to say to her, when Miss Belmour entered with a letter in her hand.

‘ Do you know a gentleman of the name of Damer,’ said she to Henrietta, ‘ who is at present at Montpelier?’

‘ I do, Madam,’ replied she, looking eagerly at the letter.

‘ Then this letter is for you, I suppose,’ said Miss Belmour; ‘ it was inclosed in another to me, and directed to my banker’s: but is your name Courteney? you see the superscription is for Miss Courteney.’

‘ The letter is certainly for me, Madam,’ said Henrietta, blushing.

‘ Oh! then,’ replied Miss Belmour, smiling, and giving it to her, ‘ I have discovered a secret, I find.’

Henrietta retired immediately; and Miss Belmour approached Mr. Freeman, who stood leaning over his chair, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

‘ What is the matter with you?’ said she; ‘ you look excessively pale.’

‘ Where is Miss Benson, Madam?’ said he, starting out of his reverie at the sound of her voice.

‘ She is in her own chamber, I believe,’ replied Miss Belmour; ‘ but did you take notice of what passed about the letter? I delivered it to her before you on purpose: you see she in

‘ a manner owned that Courteney is her true name; is not this strange?’

‘ I must beg leave to speak to her again,’ said he, interrupting her, and making towards the door; ‘ which way, pray, Madam?’

Miss Belmour followed him, surprized at the agitation he appeared to be in; and pointing to a room just opposite, ‘ you will find her there,’ said she.

Freeman opened the door without any ceremony. Henrietta, who was reading her letter, looked up at the noise he made in entering: ‘ This is extremely rude,’ Sir,’ said she; ‘ I desire you will instantly be gone, and trouble me no more.’ But, apprehensive that he would not quit her so easily, she rushed by him, and was running to the room in which she had left Miss Belmour: he took hold of her hand, to prevent her leaving him; and she was upon the point of expressing her resentment at the insolence of this treatment, in harsher terms than any she had yet used, when she saw tears gush in great abundance from his eyes. Moved at this sight, she stood still, but endeavoured to disengage her hand, looking at him earnestly, and in the utmost astonishment.

‘ O my sister!’ cried he at last, bursting into a fresh flood of tears; ‘ my dear, dear sister!’—He was not able to utter a word more, but led her gently back to her chamber, which she permitted, trembling, confused, and full of anxious expectation.

‘ How strangely you look upon me!’ said he; ‘ do you doubt whether I am your brother?’

‘ I know not what to think,’ replied she, shrinking from his embrace; for he had folded his arms about her.

‘ Dear girl!’ cried he, ‘ how amiable is this sweet reserve, these modest doubts—but it is certain I am your brother, my Henrietta: is it possible your memory retains no traces of my features? in yours, methinks, I see a lively resemblance of my dear mother. How dull was I that I did not discover it before! but how could I expect to meet you in France, in such a situation, and under a disguised name! Oh! my dear sister, these circumstances distract me—Good Heaven! what a part have I acted—I perceive you are still perplexed,’ pursued he, after a little pause; and, taking a miniature picture out of his pocket, ‘ You will certainly be able

'to recollect your mother's picture,' said he, 'which she gave me at parting.'

Henrietta looked at the picture, kissed it, and then threw herself in tears upon her brother's neck. 'Forgive my doubts,' said she, 'it is many years since I have seen you; we were children when we parted, but now I am convinced you are my brother: my heart tells me so without this dear testimony,' pursued she, kissing again the picture of her mother, which she still held; then suddenly clasping her hands together, and lifting up her fine eyes, which were swimming in tears—'I thank thee, O my God!' said she, 'for restoring to me my brother:' and, turning again to him with an affectionate look, 'A few moments ago,' said she, 'I thought myself very unhappy, but now you will be a friend and protector to me.'

He tenderly kissed her cheek—'What a wretch have I been!' said he, sighing.—'Indeed, my dear sister, I never shall forgive myself for having ignorantly practised on your virtue.'

'Oh! that my brother,' replied Henrietta, 'would be taught by this accident, never more to form designs against innocence; and, in cases like mine, to consider every virtuous young woman as a sister.'

Mr. Courteney, for so we shall now call him, was extremely moved at these words. He gazed at her some moments with mingled tenderness and delight; but all on a sudden, as if struck with some painful reflection—

'Henrietta,' said he, with a look and accent greatly altered from his former sweetness, 'why came you to France? and how has it happened that you are intimately connected with this woman, this Miss Belmour?'

'Why, do you know any harm of Miss Belmour?' said Henrietta, frightened at his sternness.

'You don't answer my question,' replied he, peevishly.

'Alas! my dear brother,' said Henrietta, 'I have a long and melancholy story to tell you: I have been reduced to great distress; my aunt, with whom you supposed me so happily settled, has treated me unkindly: I must confess, indeed, I have not been wholly free from blame; but you shall know all some other time. As for Miss Belmour, I was recommended to her—'

'I would not shock you, brother; but

'I have been obliged to go to service; and I was recommended to Miss Belmour by two ladies of quality, her near relations.'

Mr. Courteney sighed deeply at this account, and remained for several moments silent; at length recovering himself—

'Miss Belmour, it seems,' said he, 'did not always know your real name. You appear to be on the footing of a companion.'

'Miss Belmour was pleased to take a liking to me,' said Henrietta; 'and, though ignorant of my birth, would not suffer me to continue with her in the character of a servant. I have been greatly obliged to her.'

'Yes, you are obliged to her,' interrupted Mr. Courteney, kindling into rage at the remembrance of what had passed between them. 'Infamous wretch! she has done her part towards betraying you to ruin. You have been very imprudent, Henrietta; you have talked to her of Mr. Melvil too freely: she believes you are in love with him, and told me so, to encourage my attempts upon you.'

Henrietta blushed at the mention of Mr. Melvil; and presently after burst into tears at this discovery of Miss Belmour's baseness and ingratitude, but uttered not a word of complaint or resentment.

'I will not suffer you to remain any longer with her,' resumed Mr. Courteney; 'I will go directly and provide you lodgings in the house of a worthy English family: I suppose you can have no objection to this proposal.'

'Why do you look and speak so coldly, my dear brother?' said Henrietta. 'To be sure I can have no objection; dispose of me as you please; you are in the place of my father; I will obey you as such.'

'Forgive me, my dear,' said he, tenderly pressing her hand, 'my temper is warm; I have spoke to you harshly: indeed, I am greatly alarmed at the disagreeable circumstances I find you in: you have been to blame, you own. Alas! my dear sister, what have you done to be thus abandoned by your aunt? I shall be on the rack till I have heard all your story; but this is not a proper place. Take a civil leave of Miss Belmour, but do not acquaint her that you have discovered your

‘brother, for I know not yet what measures I shall take. I will call for you in less than an hour in a coach.’

Henrietta promised to be ready; he took a tender leave of her, and departed.

CHAP. V.

THE HISTORY CONTINUED.

OUR fair heroine continued some time alone in her chamber, so transported at this unexpected meeting with her brother, that she sometimes doubted whether her happiness was real, and whether all that had passed was not an illusion of her fancy. When her spirits were a little composed, she began to consider what reason she should give Miss Belmour for quitting her so suddenly: she rightly judged that the secrecy her brother had recommended to her, proceeded from his embarrassment with regard to Mr. Melvil; and she resolved, however strange her going away might appear to Miss Belmour, to follow his directions punctually.

The treachery this young lady had been guilty of towards her, excited less resentment than grief for the conviction it brought her that her principles were not changed. Several circumstances now rushed upon her memory, which served to convince her she was relapsing into her former indiscretions; and she doubted not but Miss Belmour would be rejoiced to be delivered from her presence. This thought gave her courage to go to her immediately, and acquaint her with her intention.

‘A strange alteration has happened in my affairs, Madam,’ said she, entering her apartment, ‘within this hour.’

‘That letter has brought you some good news, I suppose,’ said Miss Belmour, coldly.

‘It came from a dear and worthy friend, Madam,’ replied Henrietta; ‘and I have indeed heard some good news, which I little expected: but I am obliged to leave you, and so suddenly, that I am afraid you will think me ungrateful for your kindness, in submitting to this necessity.’

‘Pray make no apologies,’ interrupted Miss Belmour, with great indifference; ‘you are entirely at your liberty.’

Henrietta, who thought she had reason for this behaviour, was studying for some answer, which, without revealing the secret motive of her conduct, might tend in some measure to excuse it; when a servant introduced a gentleman into the room, who, though she had seen but once, she knew immediately to be Mr. Morley. She turned eagerly to observe how Miss Belmour was affected by this visit; and discovering no signs of surprise or anger in her countenance, but an excess of joy and satisfaction, she concluded this meeting was concerted, and retired immediately, in great concern, to her own room.

Here, while she waited her brother’s return, she employed herself in writing to Miss Belmour. In this letter she repeated what she had often urged before, to guard her against the base designs of her lover: she recalled to her remembrance the resolution she had made, and the vows with which she had sealed it, never more to listen to his destructive addresses; and conjured her, by every motive of religion, honour, and virtue, to banish from her sight a man whose only aim was to ruin her.

She had scarce finished her letter, when a servant came to tell her that some company waited for her in a coach. She made haste to seal it, and gave it to Miss Belmour’s maid, with orders to deliver it to her lady. At the door she found her brother, who helped her into the coach, and came in after her. He asked her, smiling, how she had parted with Miss Belmour?

Henrietta told him, she had left her with company. ‘It is indifferent to me what company she sees now you are not with her,’ said he: ‘but my heart will not be at rest till I hear all your story, sister.’

Henrietta promised to satisfy him when they were arrived at her new lodgings. ‘I am also impatient,’ said she, ‘to know your adventures; why you called yourself Freeman, and what was the cause of your not writing to me for so many months past.’

‘To say the truth, my dear sister,’ said he, ‘I have been guilty of a little neglect in not writing to you oftener: however, some of my letters must certainly have miscarried; for I wrote to you both from Brussels and Genoa, and I don’t remember I had any answer. The account you gave me of Mr. Damer’s

mer's kindness in taking upon him the office of your guardian, and your happy settlement with Lady Meadows, made me perfectly easy with regard to you. I had informed you that I was appointed governor to the Marquis of —. This young nobleman had contracted a friendship with me, during his stay at Leyden, where his governor dying, he wrote to his father, the Duke of —, in such pressing terms in my favour, which, joined to the knowledge of my birth, and very high recommendations from the university, had so much weight with him, that his Grace, notwithstanding my youth, appointed me governor to his son, with a salary of five hundred pounds a year. I have endeavoured to acquit myself faithfully of this trust; my pupil and I have always lived together like brothers; and I flatter myself his father will have no cause to repent his having consigned him to my care.'

'But why did you take the names of Melvil and Freeman?' interrupted Henrietta.

'The marquis,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'had an inclination to travel without the parade of quality, that he might, as he wrote to his father, make nearer and more useful observations upon men and manners; and, being indulged in this scheme, we have travelled through France and Italy under those names, and with a very small equipage. And now, Henrietta, that you know the quality of my friend, I expect you will not entertain any ridiculous hopes from the liking he has expressed for you. I will do him the justice to own that he never formed any dishonourable designs upon you. The character of the woman you lived with, encouraged me to make you some shocking proposals. You behaved very properly; but, my dear sister, no words can express my anguish and confusion, when I heard you own the name of Courteney, and your connections with Mr. Damer. Good Heaven! what did I suffer at that moment—What a wretch did I seem in my own eyes!'

'Let not this cruel remembrance disturb you now, my dear brother,' said Henrietta; 'I am so happy in finding you, that I forget all my past uneasinesses.'

Her looks bore delightful witness to the truth of what she said. Joy sparkled

in her charming eyes, heightened the rosy bloom of her complexion, and animated her whole air: but, dearly as she loved her brother, the assurance he gave her, that her lover had no part in the dishonourable proposals he had made her, was a circumstance that greatly increased her satisfaction in this meeting.

Mr. Courteney looked at her with admiration and delight, while a tender sense of the misfortunes she had been exposed to almost melted him into tears. As soon as the coach stopped, he told her, that the master of the house they were going into was a very worthy man, with whom he was intimately acquainted, and whose prudence he could depend upon. 'His wife,' pursued he, 'is a virtuous, sensible woman: I know no family so proper to place you in as this; and it was extremely lucky that I thought of them upon this occasion, for it was not fit you should stay with Miss Belmour, and in so short a time it was difficult to dispose of you properly.'

As soon as they alighted, Mrs. Knight came to receive Henrietta, and presented her husband to her. Both seemed greatly charmed with her appearance, and politely thanked Mr. Courteney for bringing them so agreeable a guest.

After a few compliments they withdrew, supposing the brother and sister would be glad of an opportunity to converse together in private. Mr. Courteney immediately drew his chair near his sister's, and, with a look of impatience, demanded the account she had promised him.

Henrietta blushed, and begged him not to judge her errors too severely. She then gave him a candid relation of all that had happened to her, from her mother's death till the time she met him at the inn, concealing nothing from him but Miss Belmour's passion for Mr. Morley.

Mr. Courteney was variously affected during the course of her little story. He often changed countenance, but would not interrupt her. He observed with pleasure, that she laid no stress upon any part of her conduct, which might with justice challenge esteem and admiration, but appeared nicely conscious of every little imprudence; and, when she had ended, waited for his reply, with an anxiety that shewed she rather expected censure than praise.

'My

'My dear Henrietta,' said Mr. Courteney, at length, with tears in his eyes; 'you have acted nobly; you cannot imagine how much your sufferings endear you to me, since you have behaved under them with such becoming fortitude.'

'How happy you make me,' cried Henrietta, 'by your approbation. Indeed, I was afraid you would have chidden me severely for leaving my aunt in the manner I did.'

'It was a rash step,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'but your subsequent conduct has effaced it; and I see not how you could have otherwise avoided being in the power of that villain-priest.'

After some farther conversation on different parts of her story, he looked at his watch: 'How fast the minutes fly!' said he, smiling. 'My dear Henrietta, I must leave you now, yet I have a thousand things to say to you; but I will see you to-morrow morning. You will be very happy,' continued he, 'with Mrs. Knight, and I shall have no scruple to trust you to her care, till I have conducted the marquis to London: we shall go in a day or two; and, after I have delivered my charge safe to his father, I will come back to Paris, and fetch you.'

Henrietta turned pale at these words: 'Then we are to part again soon!' said she, in a melancholy accent.

'It would be highly improper for you,' replied he, 'to take this journey with us, on several accounts: I shall be concerned to leave you, but it must be so.'

'Could you not stay till Mr. Damer comes?' interrupted Henrietta; and, taking his letter out of her pocket, 'see here how affectionately he writes to me,' added she: 'he proposes to be in Paris in three weeks, and insists upon my going to England with him.'

Mr. Courteney read the letter with great pleasure. Mr. Damer addressed her in it by the tender name of daughter; and assured her, that he would in every respect act like a father towards her. He praised her conduct in terms of the highest admiration; and begged her not to be uneasy at her aunt's desertion of her, since it was in his power to make her easy, and he was resolved to do so.

'This letter,' said Mr. Courteney, after a pause, 'will make some little al-

teration in my plan: I had resolved not to take any notice to the marquis, that I had discovered you to be my sister, but to make some excuse for your disappearing; however, I see it will be necessary to wait for Mr. Damer. I congratulate you, my dear Henrietta, on the friendship of so worthy a man.'

'But will you stay till he comes to Paris?' interrupted the tender, anxious Henrietta.

'May I depend upon your prudence, sister?' said Mr. Courteney. 'It is possible the marquis may talk to you of love: if you give him the least encouragement, you will forfeit my esteem for ever; it shall never be said, that I took advantage of his youth to draw him into a marriage with my sister.'

'O! do not suspect me of such meanness,' said Henrietta, blushing: 'if the marquis was a thousand times more amiable than he is, and were I ever so much prejudiced in his favour, I have too just a sense of what I owe to my birth, to your honour, and my own, to admit of a clandestine address—You may be entirely easy upon this article.'

'I am satisfied,' replied Mr. Courteney, tenderly pressing her hand; 'and now, my dear Henrietta, adieu for this evening.'

'Don't fail to come to-morrow,' said she, following him to the door. He smiled assentingly; and, having taken leave of Mrs. Knight, who met him as he was going in search of her, he hurried home to his pupil, by whom he was expected with extreme impatience.

CHAP. VI.

FARTHER CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY.

THE marquis, as soon as he entered his chamber, perceived that something extraordinary had happened to him.

'Sure,' said he, smiling, 'you have met with some strange adventure, Freeman; you look pleased, and yet there is a thoughtful air in your countenance.'

'I have had an adventure indeed,' replied Mr. Courteney, entering abruptly into

into an affair which could not be concealed from him; 'I have met with my sister here in Paris.'

'Your sister!' repeated the marquis; 'you did not expect her, did you?'

'No, faith,' replied Mr. Courteney; 'nor did I know her when I saw her.'

'That is not surprizing,' said the marquis; 'she was very young when you parted, I have heard you say: I hope you will allow me to pay my respects to her. But,' added he, impatiently, 'how does Miss Belmour and her fair friend?'

'Her fair friend, as you are pleased to call her,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'is my sister, whom for so many weeks I have seen almost every day without knowing her.'

'Is it possible!' cried the marquis, surprised: 'Miss Benson your sister! Sure you are not in earnest?'

'Indeed I am,' said Mr. Courteney, 'I discovered her by the oddest accident. Miss Belmour herself did not know who she was; but while I was there, she brought her a letter, which had been inclosed to her; it was directed for Miss Courteney, and came from Mr. Damer, my sister's guardian: she owned the name, and by that means I found out my sister. I see you are astonished,' added Mr. Courteney. 'Poor Henrietta has told me all her story; the repetition would be tedious, but—'

'How can you think so?' interrupted the marquis, eagerly: 'can you doubt that I am extremely interested in every thing that concerns you?'

'Excuse me, my dear marquis,' said Mr. Courteney, 'I really cannot enter into particulars just now—Fortune still persecutes my dear father in his children. I thought my sister was happily settled with her aunt Lady Meadows, who has no child, and adopted her; but the old lady, being a rigid Roman Catholick, pressed her very much to change her religion, and was at last so strangely influenced by an artful priest, who is her chaplain, that she had formed a design to send my sister, under the conduct of this fellow, to be shut up in a nunnery. The poor girl, who was, as I can collect by her account, extremely apprehensive of being so entirely in the power of this

sly priest, had no way to avoid this misfortune, but by leaving her aunt privately, who absolutely refused to be reconciled to her on any other condition than her changing her religion. Thus deserted, her guardian being abroad, and having nothing to expect from her relations, she chose to go to service, and was recommended to Miss Belmour, by the Countess of ———, her kinswoman.'

'What a wretch must your uncle be!' said the marquis, with tears in his eyes, 'to permit such excellence——' He stopped a moment; then suddenly grasping his hand, 'O my dear Freeman,' pursued he, 'you have it in your power to make me happy——You know how ardently I love your charming sister——'

'This I was apprehensive of,' interrupted Mr. Courteney. 'I beg, my lord, that you will banish these thoughts.'

'What!' cried the marquis, hastily; 'have you any objection to my passion for your sister?'

'Indeed I have, and a very strong one,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'and that is the certainty of the duke your father's disapprobation of it.'

'It is possible indeed,' said the marquis, after a little pause, 'that in the choice of a wife for me, my father will be influenced by the same motives that most fathers are: he will expect a large fortune with the person I marry; therefore, my dear Charles, you see the necessity there is for not consulting him in this case.'

'Sure you forget, my lord,' interrupted Mr. Courteney, coolly, 'what you once declared, that you would never enter into an engagement of this kind, contrary to the duke's inclinations.'

'I remember I said so,' replied the marquis; 'and were I to make a choice which he could reasonably object to, certainly it would be wrong, very wrong, to disobey him: but if the want of a fortune can make my father disapprove of my affection for a young lady of Miss Courteney's birth and merit, must I be governed by such sordid motives?'

The marquis went on to prove, by a great many arguments, common enough on such occasions, that, in the article of marriage,

marriage, a parent had no right to lay any restraint upon the inclinations of his child. Mr. Courteney did not think proper to enter into a dispute with him upon this subject: the patience with which he listened to him, made the young nobleman conclude he was not unwilling to come into his measures.

'My dear Charles,' added he, after a short pause, 'will you not be my advocate with your charming sister? I die with impatience to throw myself at her feet, and offer her my heart and hand.'

'You cannot doubt, my lord,' said Mr. Courteney, 'but that I think my sister highly honoured by the esteem you express for her; but she would be very unworthy of it, if she was capable of admitting your addresses, either unknown to your father, or in opposition to his will. I may venture to answer for her, that she will not, by so unjustifiable a conduct, expose her brother to censure: and it gives me great concern to find you are no better acquainted with my sentiments, than to imagine I will so basely betray the trust the duke has reposed in me, and be accessory to your disposing of yourself in a manner which I am very sure he will not approve.'

'Then I am to expect nothing from your friendship on this occasion, Mr. Courteney!' replied the marquis, with an air of displeasure: 'you are determined to raise difficulties to my design, instead of removing them; is this acting like a man whom I have loved like a brother, and whom it would be my highest happiness to call so?'

'To call you brother with your father's consent, my lord,' said Mr. Courteney, 'is an honour I cannot hope for, and which, without it, I do not wish.'

'As noble and disinterested as you imagine this conduct to be,' said the marquis, rising, 'it will have another name, perhaps, with persons less romantick in their notions than you are. However, Sir, you are no more than the brother of Miss Courteney: if I am happy enough to prevail with her to receive my addresses, I shall not think your consent necessary.' He passed by him with a cool bow, as he pronounced these words, and retired to his own chamber.

CHAP. VII.

IN WHICH WE ARE AFRAID SOME OF OUR READERS WILL THINK MR. COURTENAY ACTS A VERY SILLY PART.

MR. Courteney saw plainly, that by refusing to comply with his pupil's desires, he should entirely lose his friendship; but, in a case where his honour was so greatly concerned, this consideration had no weight with him: and although he had a high opinion of his sister's candour and integrity, yet the intimation Miss Belmour had given him of her regard for Mr. Melvil, made him apprehensive that she might be prevailed upon to listen to the vows of the Marquis of —. He resolved, therefore, to keep the place of her abode a secret, (for he knew he could depend upon the prudence of Mr. Knight and his wife) and to use his utmost endeavours to hasten the young lord's departure from France.

The marquis, mean time, was forming very different designs. It is so rare a thing for a man in love to be either reasonable or just, on occasions where the interest of his passion is concerned, that it is not surprizing the marquis should impute his governor's conduct with regard to his sister to peevishness and caprice, and think himself extremely ill used by his not accepting his offers. He conceived Miss Courteney to be equally injured by the opposition her brother made to the advancement of her fortune; and flattering himself that, if his person was not disagreeable to her, he should soon overcome any scruples Mr. Courteney might have suggested on account of the duke his father's disapprobation, he determined to consult him no farther in the affair, but to address himself directly to her.

He spent part of the night in writing a letter to her, in which he declared his passion in the most tender and respectful terms, and begged she would allow him to wait upon her. The remaining hours were not spent in sleep, but impatient longings for the morning, which was to confirm or destroy his hopes. As soon as it was light, he rose and walked about his room. He read over the letter he had written; he thought it but poorly expressed the ardour of his love: he sat
down

down and wrote another, which he liked still less, and had recourse again to the first, after adding a postscript, in which he earnestly repeated his request to be indulged with a few moments private discourse with her.

He sealed up his letter, and directed it for Miss Courteney. Her brother had not mentioned to him his having removed her from Miss Belmour: he supposed she was still with her; but a doubt occurring to him, whether she was willing to assume her real name yet, he thought it best to put it in another cover, superscribed for Miss Benson.

It was still too early to send to a lady's lodgings; he counted the hours with anxious impatience, and at length rung his bell for his servant. As soon as he appeared, he gave him the letter, recommending secrecy, and charging him not to return without an answer.

The valet, when he came back, brought him word that Miss Benson was gone; and this was all the intelligence he could get. Miss Belmour's woman indeed had added with a sneer, that she went off with Mr. Freeman, and it was strange that his friend Mr. Melvil should not know where she was. This part of the message the fellow prudently suppressed; for he judged the business to be an amour, and that the young gentlemen were rivals, and he was afraid of making mischief.

The marquis, however, easily guessed that this sudden removal of Miss Courteney was her brother's act: he dismissed his servant; and beginning now to be sensible how much it was in his governor's power to traverse his designs, and how obstinately he was bent upon doing so, he resigned himself up to the most violent transports of rage; and, during a few moments, all his thoughts ran upon revenge.

Mr. Courteney came into his chamber while he was under these agitations; and, seeing him walking about with a furious pace—'For Heaven's sake, my lord,' said he, 'what is the matter with you?'

The marquis turned short upon him, and, with a voice broken with passion, exclaimed—'May I perish, Courteney, if I forgive you!'

Mr. Courteney, who supposed this resentment was the consequence of their conversation the night before, replied

calmly—'You are angry, my lord; this is no time to talk.'

He was going out of the room, but the marquis, hastily stepping between him and the door, shut it with great violence.

'If it is not your time to talk, Sir, it is mine,' said he.

'Very well, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, with a composed look and accent, 'I am ready to hear you.'

The young nobleman continued to walk in a sullen silence, as if resolved to be angry, and knew not well what cause to assign for it; when suddenly stopping—

'I insist upon your telling me, Sir,' said he, 'why you have secreted your sister? Do you suspect I have dishonourable designs upon her?'

'Dishonourable designs upon my sister!' repeated Mr. Courteney, kindling at the expression: 'my lord, no man, while I have life, shall incur such a suspicion with impunity.'

'This spirit becomes one of your birth,' replied the marquis; 'but let me tell you, Mr. Courteney, your conduct is not altogether consistent; why must your sister be hurried, nobody knows whither, and concealed with such wonderful caution?'

'Are you sure this is the case, my lord?' said Mr. Courteney.

'Yes, very sure,' answered the marquis, hastily.

'Since it was not I who gave your lordship this information,' resumed Mr. Courteney, 'you must have taken some trouble to come to the knowledge of it; and the motive that set you upon these enquiries sufficiently justifies my caution with regard to my sister.'

'Then I am not worthy, it seems, to pay my addresses to your sister,' said the marquis, peevishly.

'Indeed, my lord, this is a very childish speech,' replied Mr. Courteney: 'you know your addresses would do honour to any woman; but the depressed state of my sister's fortune leaves her no right to expect a man of your quality for a husband; and she has too just a pride to submit to make a clandestine marriage; nor will I be branded with the imputation of having seduced my pupil into a marriage with my sister.'

'What have you to do with the affair

‘at all?’ replied the marquis, eagerly: ‘leave Miss Courteney to act as she thinks proper; you need not make yourself answerable for my conduct on this occasion. I loved her before I knew her to be your sister; cannot your romantick honour satisfy itself with being passive in this business?’

‘I should but ill perform my engagements to your father, my lord,’ interrupted Mr. Courteney, ‘if I did not use my utmost endeavours to prevent you from displeasing him in a matter of so great importance as your marriage.’

‘How are you sure my father will be displeased?’ said the marquis: ‘Miss Courteney’s merit will justify my choice.’

‘Put it upon that issue,’ replied Mr. Courteney; ‘ask his consent.’

‘Well, Sir, I will ask his consent,’ resumed the marquis; ‘and now am I at liberty to visit your sister?’

‘If you intend, my lord, to be governed by the duke’s advice,’ said Mr. Courteney, ‘you will certainly be contented to wait his answer; and you cannot suppose that, knowing your sentiments so well as I do, I will permit my sister to receive your visits while we are ignorant of the duke’s intentions.’

The marquis lost all patience at this unreasonable obstinacy, as he conceived it. ‘I renounce your friendship from this moment,’ said he, ‘for ever; and, had you not a sister, I would resent this behaviour in another manner.’

He flung out of the room when he had said this; and, shutting himself up in his study, gave his valet orders to allow no body to disturb him.

Mr. Courteney was not so much offended at the harshness of his language, as to hinder him from feeling great concern for the uneasy state of his mind; and, notwithstanding his own temper was vehement enough, yet he was able to make some allowances for the transports of a young man, who saw himself so resolutely opposed in a point he had set his heart upon: but despairing to pacify his pupil without entering into his design, he determined to place his sister effectually out of his reach; and then, if he could not prevail upon him to return to England, nothing remained but to make the duke his father acquainted with the whole affair.

He waited some time in expectation that the marquis would come down to breakfast as usual; but finding that he had ordered his chocolate to be brought to him in his study, he went to visit his sister, as he had promised.

The marquis heard him, as he passed by his door, call for his hat and sword; and his valet entering a moment afterwards with the chocolate, he asked him, if Mr. Freeman was gone out? Being answered that he was, it suddenly came into his head that he was going to see his sister.

‘Follow him instantly,’ said he to the fellow, ‘and bring me word to what place he goes; and here is something to purchase your secrecy and diligence.’

The sight of five Louis d’ors, which the marquis gave him, left the valet no inclination to be discreet any longer. He ran out of the room with officious haste, fully determined to execute his commission with the utmost exactness. When he got into the street, he perceived Mr. Courteney walking leisurely on; he followed him at a distance; took particular notice of the house he entered; and, after waiting a few moments to see whether he came out again, he went back to the marquis with his intelligence.

The young lover did not doubt but he had discovered his mistress’s abode; and in the joy this thought gave him, he bestowed many praises on his valet’s ingenuity, together with a reward of five Louis d’ors more, which he liked still better. He then ordered him to give directions for his chariot to be got ready, while he assisted him to dress. His looks discovered such an excess of satisfaction, that the valet, under no apprehensions that what he had done would produce any disagreeable consequences, entered with vast delight upon his new post of confidant to his master. The marquis ordered him to stay at home till Mr. Freeman came in, and then immediately to come to him at the Hotel de —.

CHAP. VIII.

IN WHICH MR. COURTENAY GIVES MORE INSTANCES OF HIS FOLLY.

WHILE Henrietta thus innocently sowed the seeds of discord between the two friends, she herself enjoyed

joyed a perfect composure of mind, and indulged the most pleasing reflections on the happy change of her fortune.

She was no longer in the humiliating condition of a servant; or, what to her was far more mortifying, a dependant upon the bounty of another; an unknown wanderer, without friends or protectors. She was now under the care of a brother, whom she tenderly loved, whose merit could not fail of distinguishing him, and of forcing that respect and consideration due to a noble birth, and which he, though in a depressed fortune, so nobly supported.

She was assured that her guardian was not only free from any unfavourable prejudices on account of her aunt's desertion of her, but that she might expect all the tender offices of a parent from him; and, what afforded the nice sensibility of her soul a more delicate satisfaction than all this, the only man in the world whom she was capable of regarding with a preference to the rest of his sex, though in so elevated a rank, had loved her in indigence and obscurity with honour, and justified the tender sentiments she entertained for him.

Her smiles, when she saw her brother appear, and the gaiety of her behaviour, convinced him her mind was at ease; but his features still retained that impression of chagrin he had so lately felt from the marquis's causeless rage; and there was a solemnity in his manner, that, in an instant, changed the innocent cheerfulness of Henrietta into anxiety and concern.

The presence of Mrs. Knight was a restraint upon them both. She perceived it; and as soon as the tea-table was removed, (for the ladies were at breakfast when Mr. Courteney came in) she retired and left them at liberty.

The moment she was gone, Henrietta eagerly asked him, if any thing had happened to give him uneasiness since she saw him?

'Yes,' replied he abruptly, 'the marquis and I have quarrelled.'

'Quarrelled!' repeated Henrietta, trembling and pale as death, 'have you quarrelled?'

Mr. Courteney, who observed her emotion, continued to look at her so earnestly, that she blushed and cast down her eyes. 'You seem greatly affected with this accident,' said he at last; 'I wish I had not mentioned it to you.'

'Could you suppose,' said Henrietta, in an accent which had at least as much of grief as tenderness in it, 'that I could hear with indifference what must necessarily be very afflicting to you?'

'Your indifference, perhaps, on this occasion,' said Mr. Courteney, 'would be more welcome to me than the concern I see you under.'

Henrietta having pondered a little on the meaning of these words, replied in a firmer tone, 'Place some confidence in me, brother; you will find I shall deserve it.'

'My dear Henrietta,' resumed Mr. Courteney, affected with the manner in which she spoke, and her expressive look, 'you ought to forgive my doubts, when you reflect on what Miss Belmour told me: the merit of my noble pupil has made an impression on your heart; but your marriage with him, sister, will bring everlasting infamy upon me.'

'Have I not already declared my resolution to you upon this head?' replied Henrietta.

'The marquis loves you,' resumed Mr. Courteney; 'he is rash and inconsiderate; he has no hope (and indeed it would be strange if he had) that the duke his father will consent to such an unequal match; yet he presses me to introduce him to you as a lover, and to favour his designs of marrying you privately. You may easily imagine what answer I gave him; the consequence is, that he has declared himself my enemy. We are upon very bad terms. But this is not my greatest concern: the marquis, if he can get access to you, will tease you with solicitations; and, disposed as you are in his favour, have I not cause to apprehend you will listen to him but too readily?'

'Although I should confirm your suspicions,' said Henrietta, with tears in her eyes, 'yet I must again repeat, I am grieved at this difference between your pupil and you. Nay, I will own,' pursued she, avoiding with a sweet bashfulness the earnest looks of her brother, 'that I am not insensible of this young nobleman's affection for me; but, after this candid confession, you ought to believe me, when I assure you, that I will enter into no engagement with him without your approbation; and, to make you easy, I will

‘ comply with any measures you think proper, to avoid his pursuits.’

‘ I see I may rely upon you,’ said Mr. Courteney, charmed with her amiable frankness; ‘ but, my dear Henrietta, I hope you will not allow this prepossession to take too deep root in your heart: sure your good sense, and the delicacy of your sentiments, will hinder you from giving way to a hopeless passion.’

‘ I beg you not to talk to me on this subject,’ interrupted Henrietta, tears, in spite of her endeavours to restrain them, flowing fast down her face; ‘ only tell me what you would have me do to avoid the marquis: Have you formed any plan? Doubt not of my readiness to comply with it.’

‘ Have you any objections to boarding in a convent till Mr. Damer comes?’ said Mr. Courteney.

‘ No,’ replied Henrietta, half smiling, ‘ for I cannot suspect you have a design upon my religion, as my aunt had, and mean to confine me all my life.’

‘ No, really,’ resumed Mr. Courteney, smiling likewise; ‘ but it will be more difficult for the marquis to get access to you in a convent than here; and, as it is probable enough that this affair will make some noise, it will be more for your reputation to have it known that you lived in such a respectable society, where there were so many witnesses of your conduct, and such exact regularity required, than in private lodgings, where you were accountable to nobody for your actions.’

‘ Then you intend to leave me before Mr. Damer comes?’ said Henrietta, sighing.

‘ To be sure,’ replied Mr. Courteney, ‘ I will force the marquis away if possible; and, if I find all my remonstrances ineffectual, the duke must interpose his authority.’

‘ You intend to write to him, then?’ said Henrietta.

‘ Certainly,’ replied he; ‘ don’t you think I ought to do so, sister?’

‘ Indeed I do,’ answered she.

‘ I am glad of it,’ resumed Mr. Courteney, ‘ yet this procedure will embroil me more with the marquis; but I see no help for it, unless Mr. Damer should happen to come sooner than we expect, and take you with him to England. I hope to prevail upon my pupil to

‘ leave Paris in two or three days; and, if I have not the satisfaction to leave you under Mr. Damer’s care, a convent is the fittest place for you to retire to.’

Henrietta, having reflected on her brother’s proposal, found it so reasonable, and so much to the advantage of her reputation, that she readily yielded to put it in immediate execution.

Mrs. Knight being desired to return, Mr. Courteney told her their design, and requested her assistance. She expressed some concern at being so soon to lose her agreeable guest, but undertook to transact the affair; and it was resolved, that she should go that day, and procure the young lady to be admitted as a pensioner in the Augustine nunnery of English ladies in Paris.

Mr. Courteney, having promised his sister to come and conduct her to the convent the next day, took leave of her, highly satisfied with her docility, and returned home. He was surprized to hear that the marquis was gone abroad; but, having no suspicion of his intention to visit Henrietta, whose abode he concluded was still a secret to him, he was only concerned lest his health should suffer, by venturing out before it was fully re-established.

The marquis’s valet no sooner saw Mr. Courteney return, than he ran immediately to acquaint his master, who set forwards, with a beating heart, to visit his mistress. The valet had given so exact a direction, that the coachman had no difficulty to find the house. The marquis alighted the moment the door was opened, and asking the servant for Miss Courteney, was instantly introduced into a parlour, where Henrietta was sitting alone, Mrs. Knight having just left her to go and execute her commission.

The sight of the marquis threw her into the utmost confusion. She rose, however, and received him with great respect: he approached her bowing, and made her a genteel compliment upon her happy meeting with her brother.

Henrietta would not suffer this subject to be dwelt upon long, lest it should lead to circumstances too interesting. She changed the conversation to indifferent matters, and took care that it should not flag a moment; so that the marquis, partly embarrassed by that awe which always accompanies a sincere passion, and partly by

by the prudent management of Henrietta, found he had protracted his visit to a considerable length, without drawing any advantage from it.

Alarmed at the thoughts of losing an opportunity, which the rigid and inflexible temper of his governor might prevent him from meeting with again, he suddenly assumed courage to make her a declaration of his passion, but in terms the most tender and respectful, and with an explicitness that became one of his rank and fortune to use towards a young lady in her delicate circumstances, whom he would not for a moment leave in doubt of the sincerity of his professions, and his firm resolution to adhere to them.

Henrietta listened to them with a graceful modesty; and, when he earnestly pressed for her answer, she assured him, that she was very sensible of the honour he did her, and should always think herself obliged to him for having entertained such favourable sentiments of her, as could make him overlook the inequality there was between them. As for the rest, she referred him to her brother, who, she said, was in the place of a father to her, and by whose advice and direction she was determined to be governed entirely.

The marquis would have had no reason to be dissatisfied with this answer, if he had not known that he had nothing to expect from an application to her brother; and the apprehension that she also knew it, and therefore took this method to free herself from his importunities, gave him so much concern, that he turned pale, and sighing, fixed his eyes upon the ground. His air, his attitude, his looks, were all so moving, so expressive of tenderness, anxiety, and grief, that Henrietta durst not trust herself to behold him, lest he should turn his eyes towards her, and discover in hers the too great interest she took in his uneasiness.

Some moments passed in an affecting silence on both sides, during which the marquis remained immoveably fixed in the same pensive posture, till roused by the opening of the door, and the appearance of Mr. Courteney. Henrietta's face was in an instant covered with blushes; the marquis seemed greatly embarrassed. Mr. Courteney shewed some surprize at first; but, recovering himself, he spoke to his pupil with an easy air, and relieved both him and his

sister from their confusion, by entering immediately into an indifferent conversation.

The marquis drew a favourable omen from this behaviour: his looks resumed their usual sweetness and vivacity; and, during a whole hour that they continued together, nothing could be more spirited and lively than the discourse between three persons, who had the most perfect tenderness for one another, yet, from their several circumstances, were obliged mutually to oppose and give pain.

The marquis at length, with apparent reluctance, put an end to his visit, as did Mr. Courteney likewise, though he was very desirous of talking to his sister in private. When they were in the chariot together, the young lord was several times upon the point of pressing his governor again upon the subject of his love, as he seemed to be less inclined than formerly to oppose him; but he was restrained from entering into any explanation, by his apprehension of destroying those hopes he had so lately begun to entertain, and of rendering his access to Henrietta more difficult for the future: Mr. Courteney also had his reasons for preventing any such explanation, and industriously amused him with other discourse.

The marquis could not help thinking it strange that he took no notice of the visit he had made his sister: but, as love is ever ready to flatter its own wishes, he began to imagine that Mr. Courteney had relaxed in the severity of his resolutions, but knew not yet how to yield with a good grace; he favoured his embarrassment therefore for the present, and they passed the remaining part of the day in their usual company and diversions.

When they came home at night, the marquis desired to have an hour's conversation with him; but Mr. Courteney, complaining of a sudden head-ach, excused himself, and retired to his own chamber.

The next morning, before his pupil was up, he repaired to Mrs. Knight's. She told him, that every thing was agreed on for the reception of the young lady; and he had the satisfaction to find his sister making preparations for her removal, without any appearance of discontent. She acquainted him with what had passed in the conversation between the marquis and her.

‘I have no doubt of his affection for you,’

'you,' said Mr. Courteney; 'we must leave the event of it to Providence, and act so as that, whatever happens, we may not incur censure.'

As soon as breakfast was over, Henrietta, accompanied by Mrs. Knight and her brother, went in a coach to the convent, where she was very civilly received by the superiour. Mr. Courteney promised to visit her soon, and took leave of her, to wait upon Mrs. Knight home; after which he returned to the marquis, who had enquired for him several times.

CHAP. IX.

IN WHICH THE READER, IT IS PRESUMED, CAN MAKE NO DISCOVERIES CONCERNING THE EVENT OF THIS HISTORY.

THE marquis, when he saw him enter his chamber, approached him with an obliging air, and affectionately pressing his hand—

'May I hope, my dear Courteney,' said he, 'that you have overcome your fantastick scruples, and that you will favour my pretensions to your charming sister? I will make you no apology for stealing a visit to her; you would, I am sure, have done the same in my situation. Indeed, Charles, you must either resolve to give me Miss Courteney, or to see me miserable. She referred me to you; my happiness depends upon a single word of yours; can you be so cruel to refuse me this instance of your friendship?'

'You know, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'that there is not any thing you can desire of me, consistent with my honour, which I would refuse; but, unless I would make myself infamous, I cannot yield to your marrying my sister without the duke's consent. Hear what I have to propose,' continued he, perceiving him to be in a violent emotion. 'Let us return to England immediately. You have often told me, that the duke is a most tender father; you are an only child; it is possible he may be prevailed upon to yield to your desires, if you tell him you cannot be happy without my sister. Let us make the trial at least.'

'I agree to it,' interrupted the marquis, eagerly, 'provided you will promise me, that if my father is so un-

reasonable as to refuse his consent, you will no longer oppose my marriage. I am of age; it is fit that, in a matter of such importance to the future happiness of my whole life, I should be at liberty to follow my inclinations. Speak, Charles, will you make me this promise?'

'Indeed, I will not, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'you must not expect it.'

'Detested obstinacy!' cried the marquis, flinging his hand away, which he had held till this moment; 'what a wretch am I to have my happiness depend upon the will of a capricious man, who mistakes his romantick whims for honour! But observe what I say, Courteney,' added he, turning hastily towards him, 'you shall not hinder me from visiting your sister; nothing but her absolute commands shall prevent my seeing her.'

'My sister,' said Mr. Courteney, 'will stay no longer in France, than till Mr. Damer, to whose care her mother left her at her death, returns from Montpellier: he is to conduct her to England; and she is gone to board in a convent till his arrival.'

'Gone to a convent!' repeated the marquis; 'this is your scheme, I suppose.'

'I hoped to prevail upon you,' said Mr. Courteney, 'since you are quite recovered, to leave Paris immediately; and I thought a convent the properest place for my sister to reside in till her guardian comes.'

The marquis instantly running over in his thoughts the use that might be made of this intelligence, replied, that he had no inclination to leave Paris yet; and broke off all farther conversation by quitting the room.

In effect, he had resolved to make an application to Mr. Damer, supposing, that since he had not the same foundation for scruples as his governor, he would readily listen to an offer so advantageous for his ward.

Mr. Courteney penetrated into his views; and doubtful how Mr. Damer would act, and whether his sister, having the sanction of his approbation, might not give way to the morions of her own heart, and encourage the addresses of the marquis; he concluded it necessary to make the duke acquainted with the whole affair, that he might take such measures

measures as he judged proper to restrain his son from an action which would incur his displeasure.

He wrote accordingly that day, and having thus discharged his duty, his mind was more at ease.

The marquis, full of hope that his new scheme would be successful, made no effort to see Henrietta, for fear of raising suspicions in her brother: but the coldness and reserve with which he treated him, sufficiently shewed how much he resented his conduct.

Henrietta was soon reconciled to a retirement, in which she had full liberty to indulge her reflections; for she was in love enough to find more satisfaction in being alone, than in the gayest and most agreeable society. Her brother did not fail to visit her every day: he found her satisfied with her situation; and, in appearance, no otherwise affected with his approaching departure, which he gave her room to expect, than what her tenderness for him might well allow of.

In the mean time the Duke of —, having received Mr. Courteney's letter, was greatly pleased with the nobleness and generosity of his behaviour. He wrote to him immediately, in terms of the highest friendship and regard; and, acquainting him with the purport of his letter to his son, recommended it to him to hasten his departure, assuring him, he had the firmest reliance upon his integrity and honour.

The packet, to avoid suspicion, had been directed as usual to the marquis, who was not surprized to find a letter in it for Mr. Courteney, to whom his father was accustomed to write often: he sent it to him immediately; and, after reading his own, he went to Mr. Courteney's chamber, holding it still in his hand.

'My father writes to me,' said he, 'to leave Paris as soon as possible. He does not expressly say, that he is ill; but, from some hints in his letter, I can collect that this is the cause of his extreme earnestness to see me. You cannot imagine how much I am affected with this accident,' pursued he, sighing. 'I love my father: I did not know how much I loved him, till I feared his loss. I am determined to set out to-morrow from Paris; but I must see your sister first, Courteney, nor ought you to refuse me the satisfaction of telling her, that I depart

'with a firm resolution never to be but hers.'

'Well, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, after a little pause, 'we will go together, and take leave of my sister.'

'I was to blame,' said the marquis, 'to expect any indulgence from you; we will go together, then, since it must be so.' He retired again to his own apartment to write to his father; and in the mean time Mr. Courteney gave the necessary orders for their journey the next morning.

Henrietta had been prepared, by a billet from her brother, for the visit that was intended her. The news of their departure had cost her some tears; but when she was informed they waited for her in the parlour of the convent, she appeared before them with all that soft composure and dignity of manners, which never forsook her in the most trying situations.

Mr. Courteney watched the turn of her countenance when the marquis accosted her, and was pleased to see it equally free from embarrassment and affectation; and that, notwithstanding all the expressive language of her lover's eyes, she had so much command over herself, as to seem the least interested person in the company.

Politeness obliged the marquis to shorten his visit, that the brother and sister might be at liberty to take a private leave of each other. He rose from his seat, and approached Henrietta with an air that left her no room to doubt of his intention to say something particular to her; and now, for the first time, her looks betrayed some little confusion.

'I cannot go away, Madam,' said he, 'without renewing the declaration I made you some days ago; and I take this opportunity to assure you, before your brother, who knows the sincerity of my heart, that my sentiments for you will ever be the same; and, if you do not forbid it, I will carry away with me the dear hope of being able one day to merit your esteem.'

Henrietta curtsied in silence; but her blushes, and the soft confusion she was in, seemed no unfavourable omen for the marquis: he bowed respectfully, and retired.

Mr. Courteney, affecting not to perceive his sister's concern, entered, immediately after his pupil's departure, into

other

other discourse. He recommended it to her to improve her guardian's esteem for her; and assured her he would visit Lady Meadows; and use his utmost endeavours to remove her prejudices, and restore her to the place she formerly held in her affection. At her desire likewise he promised to call upon Mrs. Willis, to whom she had been so greatly obliged. He charged her to keep up no sort of intimacy with Miss Belmour, though she should seek it; but permitted her, in company with Mr. Damer, to pay her a farewell visit: and, indeed, the conduct of that young lady, since the arrival of Mr. Morley, justified these precautions.

Henrietta promised to follow all his directions. He said a thousand affectionate things to her; and then, desiring to see the superiour, he tenderly recommended his sister to her care; took a short leave, and went home; while Henrietta retired to her chamber to weep.

The marquis was not visible till the next morning, when he was informed that the post chaise was at the door. His extreme melancholy during the whole journey gave his governor great concern: but he in vain attempted to amuse him; for though the marquis believed to him with all imaginable respect, yet he was so cold and reserved, that he found it impossible to renew his former freedom with him.

The Duke of — had informed them, that he should be at his country seat; and, immediately upon their landing in England, they repaired thither. The duke received his son with the most tender transports, and his governor with every mark of esteem and regard.

The morning after their arrival, he sent for Mr. Courteney into his closet, and thanked him in very affectionate terms for having so faithfully and honourably discharged his trust. He politely avoided mentioning the affair of the young lord's passion for his sister, because she was his sister; but said enough to convince him, that he had the most grateful sense of his disinterested conduct upon that occasion. He settled on him, during his life, the sum he had allowed him while he travelled with the marquis; and offered him, in the most cordial manner, all his interest towards procuring him an establishment suitable to his birth.

Mr. Courteney received these instances of the duke's friendship for him with re-

spect and gratitude; but he was more touched with the old nobleman's delicacy with regard to his sister, than with all the favours conferred on himself.

The interest of this sister, whom he loved with the most tender affection, made him hasten his departure from the duke's seat, that he might wait on his aunt, who he had heard was in London. The duke embraced him tenderly at parting, and obliged him to promise that he would return as soon as possible. The marquis lost all his reserve and coldness when he took leave of his governor, his friend, and, what was more than all, the brother of his adored Henrietta.

'You have used me unkindly,' said he in a low voice, yet pressing him tenderly to his breast; 'but I shall always love you.'

Mr. Courteney let fall some tears, but made no answer; and immediately after mounting his horse, he set out for London, attended by his own servant, and one of the duke's, whom his grace had ordered to escort him.

CHAP. X.

WHICH LEAVES THE READER STILL IN DOUBT.

MR. Courteney, when he came within a short distance of London, dismissed the duke's servant, with compliments to his grace and the marquis, and proceeded on his journey. It came into his head to alight at the house of Mrs. Willis, from whom it was possible he might receive some intelligence that would be of use to him. The good woman received him with great civility; but, when he told her his name, she was in transports, and enquired for her beloved Miss Courteney with the tender anxiety of a mother.

Mr. Courteney told her, that his sister would soon be in London with her guardian. He took occasion to thank her for her friendly care of her, which Henrietta had mentioned with the utmost gratitude; and assured her, he should always consider himself as highly obliged to her.

'How largely do I share in my dear Miss Courteney's joy,' said she, 'for so happy a meeting with her beloved brother! Heaven will, I doubt not, shower it's blessings on her; for sure, if

if ever mortal deserved them, she does.
 'O! Sir, your sister is an angelick creature—'

Mrs. Willis, indulging the tender effusions of her heart, continued to expatiate on Henrietta's virtues, till Mr. Courteney, though not displeased to hear her, interrupted her, to ask some questions concerning his aunt.

'I was going to write to Miss Courteney to-day, Sir,' replied she; 'for I have great news to acquaint her with. That vile priest, who was the cause of all her uneasiness, has at length shewn himself in his true colours: the sanctified hypocrite was detected in an amour with Lady Meadows's woman. This affair has opened her eyes; she thinks her niece has been greatly injured by the misrepresentations of this wretch, whom she has discarded with infamy; and the first proof she has given of her favourable disposition towards Miss Courteney, was her taking again her former woman, whom she had dismissed on account of her attachment to the young lady. I had this intelligence from Mrs. White herself; for so your aunt's woman, Sir, is called. She says she does not doubt but her lady will write to Miss Courteney in the most tender manner, and invite her home again.'

This news gave Mr. Courteney great satisfaction: he resolved not to delay a moment visiting his aunt; his portmanteau had been carried into a chamber by Mrs. Willis's directions, and thither he retired to dress. As soon as he was ready, he got into a hackney-coach, and, fraught with a thousand kind wishes from this faithful friend of his sister, he proceeded to the house of Lady Meadows.

He was so lucky as to find her at home, and sent in his name without any hesitation. The old lady, in a violent flutter of spirits, advanced as far as the door of her apartment to meet her nephew. His graceful form and polite address prejudiced her instantly in his favour; and she received him with all the tenderness he could have wished, and with much more than he expected.

Her first enquiries were for Henrietta. Mr. Courteney was pleased with this solicitude, but he observed that, during the course of their conversation, her attention with regard to his sister decreased considerably. He praised her with all

the modesty, yet with all the affection of a brother.

Lady Meadows, who had heard a very advantageous account of her niece from the countess, her good friend, assured him that she knew his sister's merit, and had restored her to that tenderness and esteem, which some little errors of hers, and some unjust suspicions of her own, which had been artfully infused into her, had robbed her of. She expressed great satisfaction at hearing of her guardian's kindness: but her words—'I hope he will do something for her,' gave Mr. Courteney great concern; who, from the first moment that he had heard Henrietta was likely to recover her favour, had formed a scheme to make her and the marquis happy.

Lady Meadows perceived that he was affected with that expression: she therefore added, that his sister might depend upon a welcome reception from her, whenever she returned to England.

Though there was nothing to object to the words of this declaration, yet there was a great deal to the manner of it. In the coldness with which she made it, he saw the disappointment of his hopes. In reality, Lady Meadows had begun to entertain a prodigious fondness for her nephew; and Henrietta had now but the second place in her affection. The longer she conversed with him, the more this fondness increased. Women are ever readier to discover merit in the other sex than their own. Henrietta had as many amiable qualities as her brother, but Lady Meadows was not so sensible of them: and Mr. Courteney made as great a progress in her affections in three hours, as his sister had done in as many months.

When he rose up to take his leave, she declared with some vehemence, that he must have no other home than her house. 'You have an aunt,' added she, smiling, 'though you have no uncle, nor any other relations.' Mr. Courteney reddened with indignation at the mention of his unworthy uncle; but, recovering himself, he made her suitable acknowledgments for her kindness; and, at her desire, immediately dispatched a messenger to Mrs. Willis, to acquaint her that he should not return, and at the same time sent orders to his servant to bring his portmanteau.

Lady Meadows having given direc-

tions for an apartment to be prepared for Mr. Courteney, they passed the evening together with great satisfaction, particularly on the part of the old lady, who thought herself extremely happy in having so accomplished a youth for her nephew. All her thoughts ran upon the pleasure she should have in shewing him to her friends and acquaintance, and of piquing his unnatural uncle, by openly professing her regard for him.

More than a week after his arrival was spent in a continual succession of visits, to all which he attended her; and so absolutely had he won her heart in that time, that she determined on nothing less than the making him her sole heir. Mr. Courteney, who was desirous of improving the favour he was in to his sister's advantage, took all opportunities to revive his aunt's affection for her; so that, to please him, she expressed an impatience to see her. He received letters from her, and from the Duke of —, the same day. Henrietta informed him, that she had heard from Mr. Damer, and that she expected him in Paris in a few days: that the affairs he had to settle there, would detain him but a short time; after which they were to set out immediately for England. She added, that the marquis had wrote to her, and gave him a brief recapitulation of his letter, which seemed to be dictated by the most ardent affection, and the strictest principles of honour.

The duke's letter contained only an earnest request to see him as soon as possible. Lady Meadows was very unwilling to part with him, though he assured her, he would return in two or three days. He spent part of the night in answering his sister's letter, and set out the next morning in a post-chaise for the duke's seat: he reached it in the evening at supper-time.

He found only the duke and his son at table; in the countenance of the latter, he observed a profound melancholy, which sensibly affected him. The duke received him with great kindness. The marquis spoke little, but seemed pleased to see him. The next morning the duke sent for Mr. Courteney into his closet.

'What shall I do with my son?' said he to him abruptly, as soon as he entered. 'You see the way he is in; he will certainly break my heart. I made him a very advantageous proposal three days ago: he tells me positively his

heart is engaged; yet he knows I am very desirous the match I mentioned to him should take place. This is such an instance of obstinacy and disobedience, as I know not how to pardon. Little did I imagine that his return, which I so passionately wished for, would be productive of so much uneasiness to me.'

The duke paused here, and looked earnestly at Mr. Courteney; who, not knowing what it was he expected from him, or to what aim his words were directed, continued silent, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

'I see you are concerned,' resumed the duke, 'for the trouble this unlucky affair gives me.'

'Indeed I am, my lord, most sincerely,' replied Mr. Courteney.

'Then I may depend upon your readiness to assist me in removing it,' said his Grace. 'Hear what I have to propose. Your sister, allowing for the warmth of an admirer's imagination, appears to me, by my son's account of her, to have a great deal of merit: such a young lady cannot be without pretenders to her heart. It would give me great pleasure to contribute to her establishment: if you have a match in view for her, let me know if I can forward it, either by my purse or my interest. I candidly confess to you, that mere generosity is not my motive for making you this offer: my son's passion is strengthened by hope; when your sister is married, I may find it less difficult to prevail upon him to yield me the obedience I require, and which I have a right to expect. You do not answer me, Mr. Courteney,' added his Grace, after a little pause; 'is there any thing disagreeable in this proposal?'

'Thus pressed, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'it becomes me to speak with plainness and sincerity. — I have no power over my sister's inclinations, and no consideration whatever should oblige me to hurry her into a marriage which her own choice did not direct her to. Besides, I am not without suspicions, that the merit of the marquis has made some impression on her heart; and, though she has sacrificed it to her honour and duty, yet it will for some time, no doubt, render her deaf to any offer that could be made her. I am very certain, my lord, that she will never encourage the address

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of the marquis without your Grace's consent; but were she capable of acting differently from my hopes and expectations, my honour is concerned to prevent it: and I most solemnly assure your Grace, that my sister shall never be the wife of the marquis without your express approbation.

The duke could not help being pleased with the candour and spirit of this reply. We must leave this affair then as we found it, said he: I am so well convinced of your integrity and honour, that I rely upon you entirely to prevent any consequences that may be disagreeable to me.

The duke that moment perceiving his son crossing the terrace opposite to his window, desired Mr. Courteney to join him. You have still great influence over the marquis, said he; try what your persuasions can do to make him alter his behaviour; this obstinacy of his both afflicts and offends me.

Mr. Courteney bowed, and quitted the duke's closet immediately. The marquis, when he saw him coming towards him, stopped to wait for him.

You have been closeted with my father, said he to him, smiling: may I know the subject of your conversation?

I dare engage your lordship guesses, replied Mr. Courteney, smiling likewise.

I believe I do, said the marquis; the duke has been complaining of me for my disobedience, has he not?

His Grace tells me he has made you a proposal, my lord, which you have rejected, answered Mr. Courteney, and he is under great concern about it.

Well, I am sorry for his uneasiness, interrupted the marquis: but there is no help for it.

Ah, my lord, said Mr. Courteney, have I not cause to be very uneasy also? I who know your motive for disobliging the duke, in a point he seems to have so much at heart?

You are mistaken, resumed the marquis; I should act as I do, though I had never seen Miss Courteney. But tell me, my dear Charles, have you heard from your sister?

I have, my lord, replied he.

She is well, I hope, resumed the marquis, sighing.

She says nothing to the contrary, answered Mr. Courteney; but I find your lordship has written to her.

Then she mentions me in her letter? cried the marquis, eagerly: I did indeed write to her, but she would not favour me with an answer. But, dear Charles, continued he, have you not Miss Courteney's letter about you? let me see that part where I am mentioned. Shew me only my name, written by her dear hand, you know not what pleasure it will give me to see it.

Upon my honour I have not her letter here, said Mr. Courteney. Why, why, my lord, pursued he, in great concern, will you indulge this fatal passion for my sister? you must by this time be convinced that it can produce nothing but uneasiness to the duke, yourself, to me, and even to her.

To her! repeated the marquis, O! Charles, your sister is wrapped up in indifference and reserve; she has not the least sensibility for what I suffer upon her account.

You are too generous, my lord, replied Mr. Courteney; to wish my sister should encourage any sentiments for you but those of respect and esteem. It would be presumption in her to hope for the duke's approbation of your passion; and were she too sensible of it, she must be unhappy.

It is enough for me to be unhappy, resumed the marquis, sighing; unhappy in the avarice of my father, to whom I have laid open my whole heart. The want of a fortune is all the objection he has to Miss Courteney; for he appeared charmed with her character, and her birth he knows. Unhappy too, in a rigid friend, who sacrifices me to the fantastick notions he has formed of honour. O! Charles, little did I imagine once that you would have contributed all in your power to make me miserable.

Indeed, my lord, replied Mr. Courteney, this reflection is cruel: this very moment all my thoughts are employed on the means to make you happy.

Now you are again my friend, interrupted the marquis, embracing him eagerly: will you then at last give me your charming sister? All that duty can require I have performed: I have

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‘implored my father’s consent; he has had the cruelty to refuse it me; and this on a motive so sordid, that I am justifiable in following my inclinations without soliciting him any more.’

‘You mistake my intentions, my lord,’ interrupted Mr. Courteney; ‘no, never expect that I will consent to your marrying my sister without the duke’s approbation.’

‘What then did you mean,’ said the marquis, ‘by the hopes you gave me just now?’

‘To prevail, if possible, upon the duke to consent to your marriage,’ replied Mr. Courteney.

The marquis sighed, and cast down his eyes, as if hopeless that this expedient would succeed; but would not say any thing to divert him from his purpose: yet he thought it strange that he should undertake a task, which, interested as he was, seemed less proper for him than any other person.

Mr. Courteney guessed his thoughts, but would not explain himself any farther. In reality, what the marquis had said of his father’s having no other objection to his choice but the want of a fortune, confirmed him in his design of using the favour he was in with Lady Meadows to the advantage of his sister; and he was not without expectations of prevailing upon her, by the prospect of so honourable a match for her niece, to do as much for her as she had formerly promised, in case she had married the old baronet.

The marquis, who beheld him earnestly, perceived something was labouring in his mind, and he began to entertain hopes of success, though he knew not on what reasonably to found them. ‘I cannot,’ said Mr. Courteney, observing the tender solicitude with which he gazed on him, ‘communicate to you the scheme I have formed to reconcile the duke to your wishes, for reasons which will be obvious enough hereafter. Only thus much I will say to satisfy you, that I think it is highly probable I shall succeed; but there is one condition which you must yield to, and which I tell you plainly is the price I set upon my endeavours to serve you in this affair.’

‘Name it,’ interrupted the marquis, eagerly; ‘it must be a strange one indeed if I do not comply with it.’

‘You must give me a solemn promise, my lord,’ resumed Mr. Courteney, ‘not to seek my sister’s consent to a clandestine marriage, if I should fail in my endeavours to procure the duke’s approbation, and you must make the same promise to his Grace likewise.—

‘Nay, my lord,’ pursued he, observing that he hesitated, ‘you risk nothing by entering into this engagement, for I am bound by oath, as well as by honour, to prevent my sister from being yours upon any terms but the duke’s express consent; and, depend upon it, you will never gain hers but on the same condition.’

‘Well,’ replied the marquis, ‘you have my promise, and I will make the same declaration to my father: it will be time enough to tell him, if your scheme proves unsuccessful, my fixed resolution never to marry at all, if I do not marry Miss Courteney.’

Mr. Courteney had already gained so important a point, that he did not think it necessary to combat this resolution at that time. They walked together into the house; and the marquis conceiving that it might be of some advantage to Mr. Courteney’s scheme to take an early opportunity of making the promise he required of him, the duke had that satisfaction in his next private conversation with his son, and was charmed with this new instance of Mr. Courteney’s integrity.

The marquis, after having long puzzled himself with conjectures about the design Mr. Courteney had formed, at length concluded that he had some expectations from the Earl of —, his uncle, in favour of his sister; and he was so unfortunately circumstanced between his father’s avarice and Mr. Courteney’s strict principles of honour, that he was reduced to wish earnestly for the success of an expedient, which he would have disdained, if he had been master of his own actions. Mr. Courteney, at parting, which was in a few days, begged him to rely securely upon his friendship, and to be mindful of the promise he had given him, which the young lord again confirmed.

CHAP. XI.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY DRAWS
NEAR TO A CONCLUSION.

MR. Courteney found his short absence had rather endeared him to his aunt, than lessened the ardour of her fondness. Encouraged by her behaviour, he was several times upon the point of laying open to her the whole affair of his pupil's passion for Henrietta, and the difficulties which obstructed so advantageous a match; difficulties which she could so easily remove: but he hoped a great deal from the presence of Henrietta, which it was highly probable would revive the old lady's tenderness for her; and from the interposition of Mr. Damer, who, it was not to be doubted, would enter heartily into the interest of his ward, for whom he expressed so tender an affection.

While he waited in anxious expectation of a letter from his sister, to acquaint him when she was to leave Paris, with her guardian, he was pleasingly surprized with a billet from Mr. Damer himself, requesting him to meet Miss Courteney and him at the house of Mrs. Willis, where they were just arrived.

Mr. Courteney, without communicating this news to Lady Meadows, hastened to see his beloved sister. The moment he entered the room, where she was sitting with her guardian and Mrs. Willis, she flew to receive him with a transport of joy. He embraced her tenderly; and Mr. Damer advancing to salute him, he in the politest manner thanked him for his generous care of Henrietta.

Mr. Damer was extremely pleased to hear that she might depend upon an affectionate reception from her aunt. 'And now, my child,' said he, for so he tenderly affected to call her, 'since I have delivered you safe into the hands of your brother, I will leave you, and a day or two hence I will visit you at your aunt's, and settle your affairs in a manner which I hope will not be disagreeable to you.'

Henrietta, who, from some past conversations with him, well knew the kind purport of these words, by a grateful look and a respectful curtsy, expressed her acknowledgment. Mr. Courteney, seeing him prepare to leave them, begged

he would favour him with a few moments private conversation. Mr. Damer readily consented; upon which Mrs. Willis shewed them into another room, and returned to load her dear Miss Courteney with a thousand tender caresses.

Mean time Mr. Courteney gave the friendly guardian of his sister a brief account of the marquis's passion for her, and the conduct he had observed in that affair. He added, that he believed it would be easy to engage the duke's consent to his son's marriage with Henrietta, provided her aunt would act as generously towards her, as she had formerly given her reason to expect.

'From several hints,' said he, 'which Lady Meadows has thrown out, and from the great kindness she expresses for me, I am apprehensive that she intends to transfer her bounty from my sister to me; but as my circumstances, though not affluent, are easy, and as I have nothing so much at heart as the happiness of my friend and my sister, I will most chearfully relinquish in her favour all my expectations from Lady Meadows. The prospect of so advantageous a match will probably have some weight with her aunt; and the mention of it will come with propriety from you, Sir, as the guardian of Henrietta. Lady Meadows will then explain herself clearly; and we shall have an opportunity given us of pressing her to remove, by her generosity, the only obstacle that obstructs my sister's advancement.'

Mr. Damer was prodigiously affected with the uncommon nobleness of this proceeding. He took the young gentleman's hand, and, giving it an affectionate shake, 'I shall love and honour you while I live,' said he, 'for this generous proposal: doubt not of my ready concurrence in every measure for your sister's advantage. I love her as well as if she was my own daughter; and the inconveniencies she has suffered through the folly and imprudence of some of my family, require that I should make her amends, by doing every thing in my power to make her happy.'

'I will wait upon Lady Meadows,' pursued he, 'to-morrow in the afternoon, and then we will talk over this affair.' Mr. Courteney told him, he would prepare his aunt for the visit he intended her. After which, Mr. Da-

mer went away, and he joined his sister and her friend. A coach being ordered, they took leave of Mrs. Willis, whom Henrietta promised to visit again very speedily. Mr. Courteney had some discourse with his sister as they went, concerning the marquis; but carefully avoided mentioning his design to her, lest he should raise hopes which might be unhappily disappointed.

Henrietta was under some perturbation at the thoughts of appearing before her aunt, whose displeasure against her, and unjust suspicions, all recurred to her memory; but the reception the old lady gave her, immediately effaced those impressions: it was perfectly kind and affectionate, without the least mixture of upbraiding or reproach.

‘I had a mind to surprize you, Madam,’ said Mr. Courteney, who with infinite pleasure beheld his sister so tenderly embraced by her aunt. Lady Meadows assured him, that he had surprized her very agreeably; and, again embracing Henrietta, told her, that her good friend, the Countess of —, had been very lavish in her praise, and had acquainted her with several circumstances of her conduct, which raised her highly in her opinion.

‘I suppose you will not be very much grieved,’ added the old lady, smiling, ‘to hear that your former lover Lord B—— is married to the citizen’s daughter.’

‘No, indeed, Madam,’ replied Henrietta; ‘they seemed to be formed for each other.’

‘They are not very happy, I hear,’ said Lady Meadows; who, having fallen upon the article of domestick news, related a great number of anecdotes concerning her acquaintance, some of which Henrietta had often heard before. The old lady’s fondness for talking at length gave way to her curiosity to hear every thing that had happened to her niece during their separation.

Henrietta gratified it with discretion, suppressing whatever might tend to revive disagreeable remembrances. She was now put into possession of her former apartment, and had an opportunity that night to congratulate her old friend Mrs. White (who assisted her to undress) upon her being reinstated in the favour of her lady.

CHAP. XII.

WHICH CONCLUDES THE HISTORY,

THE next day Mr. Courteney informed Lady Meadows, that Mr. Damer intended to wait on her; and hinted that he had a match to propose for Henrietta, which he hoped she would approve.

Lady Meadows, who had already taken her resolution with regard to both brother and sister, told him, that she was very desirous of seeing her niece settled; and that she was determined never to oppose her inclinations, being convinced that her virtue and prudence were to be entirely depended upon.

Mr. Damer came according to his appointment; and, being soon after left alone with Lady Meadows, he acquainted her with the whole affair between the Marquis of — and Henrietta, as he had received it from Mr. Courteney; and, observing that the old lady was dazzled with the prospect of her niece becoming a dutchess, added, that the want of a suitable fortune should not hinder the advancement of Henrietta: ‘for whatever you design for her, Madam,’ said he, ‘I will double; so great is my regard for her, and admiration of her virtues.’

Lady Meadows with reason thought this a very generous proposal. She complimented him upon it; and, stepping to her cabinet, took out a box that contained her will, and another deed which had been drawn up while Mr. Courteney was in the country with the Duke of —, but were not yet executed. She put these papers into Mr. Damer’s hands, and desired him to read them, saying—‘You will there see, Sir, what I intend to do for my nephew and his sister.’

Mr. Damer opened the first, which was the will. He found she had constituted Mr. Courteney her heir, leaving him her whole estate, charging it only with the sum of five thousand pounds, to be paid his sister on the day of her marriage. The other paper contained a settlement of three hundred pounds a year upon Mr. Courteney during her life.

Mr. Damer, who knew the young gentleman’s

gentleman's sentiments, proposed to Lady Meadows to send for him, and acquaint him with her intentions. To this she readily agreed. Mr. Courteney turned pale when he heard the moderate sum designed for his sister; and, after expressing his gratitude to Lady Meadows for the favour she shewed him, in terms the most respectful and affectionate, he earnestly conjured her to let Henrietta be at least an equal sharer with him in her kindness. He urged, as a motive to her to comply, the very advantageous match that was proposed to his sister. He expatiated on the marquis's tender and faithful passion for her; and touched with great delicacy upon the sentiments Henrietta could not avoid entertaining for a young nobleman, who had loved her with honour, even when ignorant of her birth, and when she was under very humiliating circumstances.

Lady Meadows interrupted him with the most flattering praises of his disinterestedness; but declared that her resolution was unalterable. 'Your sister will have ten thousand pounds,' said he; 'this is no despicable fortune: and since there is so much love on the side of the marquis, there is no doubt but it will be thought sufficient.'

Mr. Damer explained the old lady's meaning, by telling him what he proposed to do for Miss Courteney; and preventing the young gentleman's acknowledgments—'You have sufficiently shewn your regard for your sister,' said he, 'and I am of opinion we ought not to press Lady Meadows any more on this subject; she has acted nobly by you both.'

The lady was extremely flattered by the praise Mr. Damer gave her; and, to prevent any more solicitations from her nephew, she signed the papers immediately, which Mr. Damer, at her request, witnessed.

Mr. Courteney said every thing that gratitude and politeness could suggest, upon her presenting him the settlement; yet there was an air of concern upon his countenance, which Mr. Damer observing, took an opportunity to desire him, in a whisper, to meet him at a coffee-house (which he named to him) that evening, having something to say to him, which he hoped would make all things easy.

Mr. Courteney promised to attend

him. He then begged Lady Meadows not to let Henrietta know what had passed with regard to the marquis. 'At present,' said he, 'she considers this marriage as impossible to be effected, and so I would have her consider it, till I am sure that the duke will make no objection to the fortune that is designed her.' Lady Meadows approved of his caution; and Mr. Damer was desired to visit her in her own apartment, and acquaint her with the dispositions made by her aunt.

Henrietta expressed the highest satisfaction at what had been done for her beloved brother; and, with the greatest sweetness, acknowledged her obligations to her aunt for the provision she had made for her: but when Mr. Damer acquainted her with the addition he designed to make to the fortune her aunt would give her, tears of tenderness and gratitude overspread her face, and she could utter no more than—'O! Sir, how generous—how kind is this—how shall I repay such unexampled goodness!'

Mr. Damer interrupted her soft exclamations, to lead her down stairs to her aunt, to whom she paid her acknowledgments with inimitable grace, and congratulated her brother with so sincere a joy, that he, who knew how much he was likely to lose by his good fortune, was moved almost to tears.

Mr. Damer a short time afterwards took his leave, and went to the coffee-house, where he had appointed Mr. Courteney to meet him. He was soon followed by the young gentleman, whose mind was under great agitations on his sister's account.

'One would hardly imagine,' said Mr. Damer to him, smiling, 'that you have just been declared heir to a good estate; you look like one disappointed and unhappy.'

'I am indeed disappointed, Sir,' replied Mr. Courteney. 'I had laid a plan to make my sister and my friend happy; but my aunt's partiality has broke all my measures for the present.'

'Then you intend,' said Mr. Damer, who had taken particular notice of his last words, 'to make some addition to your sister's fortune, when the estate comes into your hands?'

'Certainly, Sir,' replied Mr. Courteney;

teney; 'I should but ill deserve it, if I did not.'

'It must be confessed,' resumed Mr. Damer, 'that you are a very good brother.'

'All that I can do for my sister, Sir,' said he, 'will be but bare justice; but your generosity to her can never be enough admired.'

'No more of that,' interrupted Mr. Damer. 'I love your sister: she is a worthy young woman; I am grieved to think so noble a match for her should meet with any obstruction for the want of a fortune. What do you think the duke will expect?'

'The lady he has proposed to his son, Sir,' said Mr. Courteney, 'has twenty thousand pounds; and it would have been my pride and happiness to have prevailed with my aunt to make my sister's fortune equal to that.'

'Is it possible!' cried Mr. Damer, surprised. 'Why, fifteen thousand pounds is at least one third of your aunt's fortune.'

'My sister,' said Mr. Courteney, 'has a right to expect it. The whole would have been hers but for some unlucky accidents, and the strange partiality of Lady Meadows for me. All that I can now do is, to let the marquis know, that my sister will have ten thousand pounds paid on the day of her marriage, and ten thousand more on the death of her aunt. The duke loves money; and I greatly doubt whether all his son's solicitations will make him relish this reversionary ten thousand pounds.'

'We will not put it to the hazard,' interrupted Mr. Damer: 'since you are determined to act thus generously by your sister, I will lay down the money myself, and all the security I require, is your bond for the re-payment of it when your aunt's estate comes into your possession.'

Mr. Courteney was so overwhelmed with surprise, joy, and gratitude, for this unexpected, noble offer, that, during some moments, he was unable to utter a word. But this silence, accompanied with looks the most expressive that can be imagined, was more eloquent than any language could be. Recovering himself at last, he was beginning to pay the warmest acknowledgments; but Mr. Damer would not suffer him to proceed.

'I am impatient,' said he, 'for the conclusion of this affair. Write to your friend immediately, and let him know that your sister's guardian will treat with the duke his father whenever he pleases.'

Mr. Courteney, at his reiterated request, took leave of him, and went home, in order to communicate this joyful news to his friend. Hearing that Lady Meadows and his sister were engaged in company, he went to his own apartment, and wrote a short letter to the marquis, in which he acquainted him, that his sister being restored to the favour of her aunt, he had it now in his power to assure him, that if he continued in the same sentiments towards her, and could prevail with his Grace to authorize them by his consent, he was impowered by her aunt and her guardian to declare that her fortune would be twenty thousand pounds.

Having sealed and dispatched this letter to the post, he joined the company below stairs, with looks so full of satisfaction, and a behaviour animated with such extraordinary gaiety, that Lady Meadows was more than ever delighted with him, concluding that the noble provision she had made for him was the source of his joy: but Henrietta, who knew her brother better, and who besides saw something particular in those looks which he from time to time gave her, felt strange flutterings in her gentle bosom; hopes checked as soon as formed; wishes suppressed as they rose. In these perturbations, she passed that night and the three following days.

Mean time the marquis, having received Mr. Courteney's letter, was so surprized at this sudden change in the fortune of Henrietta, that he read it over several times before he could persuade himself what he saw was real. His first emotions were all transport: every obstacle to his marriage was now removed; and he might solicit his father's consent, with a certainty almost of not being denied. Yet a sentiment of delicacy and tenderness made him regret, that it was not in his power to convince Henrietta of the disinterestedness of his love, and for some moments rendered him insensible of his present happiness.

The duke came into his chamber while he was reading the letter the twentieth time, and so intently, that he did not perceive his entrance: when suddenly

suddenly raising his eyes, and seeing his father, who, suspecting that this letter, which he seemed to read with so much emotion, came from his mistress, was looking earnestly on him.

‘O! my lord,’ cried he, ‘there is nothing wanting to make me perfectly happy, but your consent to my marriage with Miss Courteney. See, my lord, what her brother writes; her brother, who till now has so obstinately opposed my passion!’

The duke took the letter out of his hands; and, having read it, returned it to him again without speaking a word, and walked to the other end of the room. The marquis, who saw nothing unfavourable in his looks, followed him; and, throwing himself at his feet, conjured him not to oppose his happiness any longer. The duke desired time to consider; but his son would not give over his solicitations, till he had obtained leave of him to visit Miss Courteney, and to declare that his address had the sanction of his consent.

The happy marquis gave orders instantly for his post-chaise to be got ready, which his father at first did not oppose; but, after reflecting a little—

‘Can you not rein in your impatience for a few days?’ said he to him: ‘I intend to be in town next week; I shall then have an opportunity of seeing the young lady; and, since you are so obstinately bent upon the match, of talking to her aunt and her guardian.’

The marquis would not disoblige his father, by making any objections to this little delay, grievous as it was to him; but retired to write to Mr. Courteney, whom he acquainted with the duke’s intentions; and, anticipating the tender name of brother, poured out his whole heart in the warmest expressions of love, friendship, joy, and every soft emotion with which he was agitated.

Mr. Courteney having communicated this letter to Mr. Damer, he agreed that it was necessary to make Lady Meadows acquainted with the steps they had taken in the affair. She entered with a good grace into the generous designs of her nephew in favour of his sister.

‘If I had done more for her,’ said she to him, smiling, ‘you would not have had an opportunity of doing so much.’ Mr. Courteney kissed her hand with a tender and respectful air.

‘Go,’ said she, with a look that shewed she was highly pleased; ‘go, and tell your sister this good news; and tell her also that I am impatient to embrace and congratulate her.’

Mr. Courteney willingly obeyed her. He went to Henrietta’s apartment; and, seeing her sitting pensive and melancholy, he began to railly her upon her tenderness for the marquis. She bore it with great sweetness, but not without some surprize; for her brother was used to be very delicate and reserved upon that subject. By degrees he assumed a more serious tone; and at length gave her to understand, that the marquis was now permitted by his father to pay his addresses to her.

Henrietta blushed and trembled from the moment her brother began to speak to her in a serious manner. Her emotions increased as he proceeded; yet she laboured to conceal them, till Mr. Courteney, explaining to her what Mr. Damer had done for her, which necessarily included his own generous gift, that innate delicacy, which had forced her joy to be silent, suffered her gratitude to shew itself in the most lively expressions. Lady Meadows came into the room, and gave a seasonable interruption to these tender effusions of her heart, which Mr. Courteney had listened to with a kind of painful pleasure. She embraced her niece, and congratulated her on her happy fortune.

Miss Courteney, who had now reason to expect a visit from the marquis, was not much surprized, a few days afterwards, to see his equipage at the door. After a few moments conversation with Mr. Courteney, he was introduced to Lady Meadows, who received him with great respect. Henrietta blushed a little when he appeared; but recovered herself, and received the tender and respectful compliment he made her with her usual grace.

A great deal of company coming in soon afterwards, he found means to engage her apart for a quarter of an hour. Their conversation was such as might be expected between persons of their sense and politeness, who loved each other with the utmost tenderness, and now for the first time saw themselves at liberty to declare their sentiments. Henrietta did not scruple to own to the man, who had so nobly merited her esteem, that her heart had received a more ten-

der impression for him; and this soft acknowledgment completed her lover's felicity.

Mr. Courteney waited upon the duke the next morning, and had the pleasure to hear from his own mouth, that he was entirely satisfied with his son's proceedings. His Grace visited Lady Meadows the same day; and was so charmed with Henrietta, that he scarce discovered less impatience than his son for the conclusion of the marriage. Every thing being agreed on between the duke and Mr. Damer, with regard to settlements, the writings were drawn up with all convenient speed, and a day appointed for the marriage.

Lady Meadows, though a Roman Catholic, allowed the ceremony to be performed at her house: after which the new-married pair, with the old lady, the Duke, Mr. Damer, and Mr. Courteney, set out for his Grace's country-seat.

The charming marchioness did not make her first publick appearance in town till late in the ensuing winter; when her beauty, her sufferings, her virtue, and her good fortune, were for a long time the subjects of conversation.

Mr. Courteney, happy in the conscious integrity of his heart, happy in the ardent affection of his sister and the marquis, and the esteem of all who knew him, was, by the death of Lady Meadows, which happened a few months after his sister's marriage, enabled to discharge his obligations to Mr. Damer. His generosity was not long unrewarded: an opulent heiress fell desperately in love with him; she was related to the duke, who interested himself so warmly in the affair, that the marriage was soon concluded.

Lord B——, as has been observed already, lived very unhappy with his plebeian lady. The sight of the charming Henrietta renewed his passion. Tortured with remorse, disappointment, and despair, he had recourse to the bottle, and fell an early sacrifice to intemperance.

Miss Woodby, who had always a violent passion for a red-coat, listened to the sighs of a young cadet, and married him in a week after their first acquaintance. Her excuse for this precipitancy was, that the *lovely youth* would certainly have stabbed himself, if she had delayed his happiness any longer. With part of her fortune he bought a commission, and spent the rest in a few months. After which, he went abroad with his regiment, leaving her, in an obscure retirement, to bewail his absence, and soothe her love-sick heart with hopes that he would return more *passionate* than ever, and lay all his laurels at her feet.

Miss Belmour, forsaken by her lover, became a proselyte to the Roman Catholic religion, and retired to a convent, where the nuns wrought her up to such a degree of enthusiasm, that she settled her whole fortune upon the community, and took the veil; but soon afterwards, repenting of this rash step, she died of grief, remorse, and disappointment.

Mrs. Willis was generously rewarded by the marchioness for the many kind and faithful services she had received from her: and Mr. Damer, who highly esteemed her for her behaviour to his beauteous ward, settled her husband in such an advantageous way, that in a few years he made a considerable fortune.

The younger Mr. Damer found, in the incessant clamours of a jealous wife, a sufficient punishment for his treacherous designs on Henrietta; and it was not without great difficulty that he was restored to his father's favour.

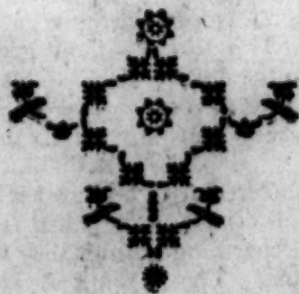
Every branch of the Courteney family made frequent advances towards a reconciliation with the marchioness and her brother: but, generous as they were, they had too just a sense of the indignities they had suffered from them, to admit of it; and, in this steady resentment, they had, as it usually happens with successful persons, the world on their side.

FINIS.



THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
N O U R J A H A D.

BY MRS. SHERIDAN.



L O N D O N:
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THE
HISTORY
OF
NOURJAHAD.



SCHEMZEDDIN was in his two and twentieth year when he mounted the throne of Persia. His great wisdom and extraordinary endowments rendered him the delight of his people, and filled them with expectations of a glorious and happy reign. Amongst the number of persons who stood candidates for the young sultan's favour, in the new administration which was now going to take place, none seemed so likely to succeed as Nourjahad, the son of Namarand. This young man was about the age of Schemzeddin, and had been bred up with him from his infancy. To a very engaging person was added a sweetness of temper, a liveliness of fancy, and a certain agreeable manner of address that engaged every one's affections who approached him. The sultan loved him, and every one looked on Nourjahad as the rising star of the Persian court, whom his master's partial fondness would elevate to the highest pinnacle of honour. Schemzeddin, indeed, was desirous of promoting his favourite: yet, notwithstanding his attachment to him, he was not blind to his faults; but they appeared to him only such as are almost inseparable from youth and inexperience; and he made no doubt but that Nourjahad, when time had a little more subdued his youth-

ful passions, and matured his judgment, would be able to fill the place of his first minister, with abilities equal to any of his predecessors. He would not, however, even in his own private thoughts, resolve on so important a step, without first consulting with some old lords of his court, who had been the constant friends and counsellors of the late sultan his father. Accordingly, having called them into his closet one day, he proposed the matter to them, and desired their opinion. But, before they delivered it, he could easily discover by the countenances of these grave and prudent men, that they disapproved his choice. 'What have you to object to Nourjahad?' said the sultan, finding that they all continued silent, looking at each other. 'His youth,' replied the eldest of the counsellors. 'That objection,' answered Schemzeddin, 'will grow lighter every day.'—'His avarice,' cried the second. 'Thou art not just,' said the sultan, 'in charging him with that; he has no support but from my bounty, nor did he ever yet take advantage of that interest which he knows he has in me, to desire an increase of it.'—'What I have charged him with is in his nature, notwithstanding,' replied the old lord. 'What hast thou to urge?' cried the sultan, to his third adviser. 'His love of pleasure,' answered he. 'That,' cried

cried Schemzeddin, 'is as groundless an accusation as the other; I have known him from his childhood, and think few men of his years are so temperate.'—'Yet would he indulge to excess, if it were in his power,' replied the old man. The sultan now addressed the fourth—'What fault hast thou to object to him?' cried he. 'His irreligion,' answered the sage. 'Thou art even more severe,' replied the sultan, 'than the rest of thy brethren, and I believe Nourjahad as good a Mussulman as thyself.' He dismissed them coldly from his closet; and the four counsellors saw how impolitic a thing it was to oppose the will of their sovereign.

Though Schemzeddin seemed displeased with the remonstrances of the old men, they nevertheless had some weight with him. 'It is the interest of Nourjahad,' said he, 'to conceal his faults from me; the age and experience of these men doubtless has furnished them with more sagacity than my youth can boast of; and he may be in reality what they have represented him.' This thought disquieted the sultan, for he loved Nourjahad as his brother. 'Yet who knows,' cried he, 'but it may be envy in these old men? they may be provoked at having a youth raised to that honour to which each of them perhaps in his own heart aspires. We can sometimes form a better judgment of a man's real disposition, from an unguarded sally of his own lips, than from a close observation of years, where the person, conscious of being observed, is watchful and cautious of every look and expression that falls from him. I will sound Nourjahad when he least suspects that I have any such design, and from his own mouth will I judge him.'

It was not long before the sultan had an opportunity of executing his purpose. Having passed the evening with his favourite at a banquet, where they had both indulged pretty freely, he invited Nourjahad to a walk by moon-light in the gardens of the seraglio. Schemzeddin leaned on his shoulder as they rambled from one delicious scene to another; scenes rendered still more enchanting by the silence of the night, the mild lustre of the moon now at full, and the exhalations which arose from a thousand odoriferous shrubs. The spirits of Nourjahad were exhilarated by the mirth and

festivity in which he had passed the day. The sultan's favour intoxicated him; his thoughts were dissipated by a variety of agreeable sensations, and his whole soul as it were rapt in a kind of pleasing delirium. Such was the frame of Nourjahad's mind, when the sultan, with an assumed levity, throwing himself down on a bank of violets, and familiarly drawing his favourite to sit by him, said—'Tell me, Nourjahad, and tell me truly, what would satisfy thy wishes, if thou wert certain of possessing whatsoever thou shouldst desire?' Nourjahad remaining silent for some time, the sultan, smiling, repeated his question. 'My wishes,' answered the favourite, 'are so boundless, that it is impossible for me to tell you directly; but, in two words, I should desire to be possessed of inexhaustible riches; and, to enable me to enjoy them to the utmost, to have my life prolonged to eternity.'—'Wouldst thou, then,' said Schemzeddin, 'forego thy hopes of Paradise?'—'I would,' answered the favourite, 'make a paradise of this earthly globe while it lasted, and take my chance for the other afterwards.'

The sultan, at hearing these words, started up from his seat, and knitting his brow—'Be gone,' said he, sternly; 'thou art no longer worthy of my love or my confidence: I thought to have promoted thee to the highest honours, but such a wretch does not deserve to live. Ambition, though a vice, is yet the vice of great minds; but avarice, and an insatiable thirst for pleasure, degrades a man below the brutes.'

Saying this, he turned his back on Nourjahad, and was about to leave him; when the favourite catching him by the robe, and falling on his knees—'Let not my lord's indignation,' said he, 'be kindled against his slave, for a few light words, which fell from him only in sport: I swear to thee, my prince, by our holy prophet, that what I said is far from being the sentiments of my heart; my desire for wealth extends not farther than to be enabled to procure the sober enjoyments of life; and, for length of years, let not mine be prolonged a day beyond that in which I can be serviceable to my prince and my country.'

'It is not,' replied the sultan, with a mildness chastened with gravity, 'it is not for mortal eyes to penetrate into the close recesses of the human heart; thou

thou hast attested thy innocence by an oath; it is all that can be required from man to man: but remember thou hast called our great prophet to witness; him thou canst not deceive, though me thou mayest.

Schemzeddin left him without waiting for his reply; and Nourjahad, exceedingly mortified that his unguarded declaration had so much lessened him in his master's esteem, retired to his own house, which immediately joined the sultan's palace.

He passed the rest of the night in traversing his chamber, being unable to take any rest. He dreaded the thoughts of losing the sultan's favour, on which alone he depended for his future advancement; and tormenting himself all night with apprehensions of his disgrace, he found himself so indisposed in the morning, that he was unable to leave his chamber. He spent the day in gloomy reflections, without suffering any one to come near him, or taking any rest: and when night came, wearied with painful thoughts, and want of sleep, he threw himself on his bed. But his slumbers were disturbed by perplexing dreams. What had been the subject of his anxiety when awake, served now to imbitter and distract his rest: his fancy represented the sultan to him as he had last seen him in the garden, his looks severe, and his words menacing. 'Go, wretch!' he thought he heard him cry; 'go seek thy bread in a remote country; thou hast nothing to expect from me but contempt.'

Nourjahad awoke in agonies. 'O Heaven!' cried he aloud, 'that I could now inherit the secret wish I was fool enough to disclose to thee; how little should I regard thy threats!'—And thou shalt, O Nourjahad, replied a voice, 'possess the utmost wishes of thy soul!' Nourjahad started up in his bed, and rubbed his eyes, doubting whether he was really awake, or whether it was not his troubled imagination which cheated him with this delusive promise; when, behold! to his unutterable astonishment, he saw a resplendent light in his chamber, and at his bed's side stood a youth of more than mortal beauty. The lustre of his white robes dazzled his eyes; his long and shining hair was encircled with a wreath of flowers that breathed the odours of paradise.

Nourjahad gazed at him, but had not

power to open his mouth. 'Be not afraid,' said the divine youth, with a voice of ineffable sweetness; 'I am thy guardian Genius, who have carefully watched over thee from thy infancy, though never till this hour have I been permitted to make myself visible to thee: I was present at thy conversation in the garden with Schemzeddin; I was a witness to thy unguarded declaration, but found thee afterwards awed by his frowns to retract what thou hadst said: I saw, too, the rigour of the sultan's looks as he departed from thee, and know that they proceeded from his doubting thy truth. I, though an immortal spirit, am not omniscient; to God only are the secrets of the heart revealed: speak boldly, then, thou highly favoured of our prophet, and know that I have power from Mahomet to grant thy request, be it what it will. Wouldst thou be restored to the favour and confidence of thy master, and receive from his friendship and generosity the reward of thy long attachment to him; or dost thou really desire the accomplishment of that extravagant wish, which thou didst, in the openness of thy heart, avow to him last night?'

Nourjahad, a little recovered from his amazement, and encouraged by the condescension of his celestial visitant, bowed his head low in token of adoration.

'Disguise to thee, O son of Paradise!' replied he, 'were vain and fruitless; if I dissembled to Schemzeddin, it was in order to reinstate myself in his good opinion, the only means in my power to secure my future prospects: from thee I can have no reason to conceal my thoughts; and since the care of my happiness is consigned to thee, my guardian angel, let me possess that wish, extravagant as it may seem, which I first declared.'

'Rash mortal!' replied the shining vision, 'reflect once more, before you receive the fatal boon; for, once granted, you will wish, perhaps, and wish in vain, to have it recalled.'—'What have I to fear,' answered Nourjahad, 'possessed of endless riches and of immortality?'—'Your own passions,' said the heavenly youth. 'I will submit to all the evils arising from them,' replied Nourjahad; 'give me but the power of gratifying them in their full extent.'—

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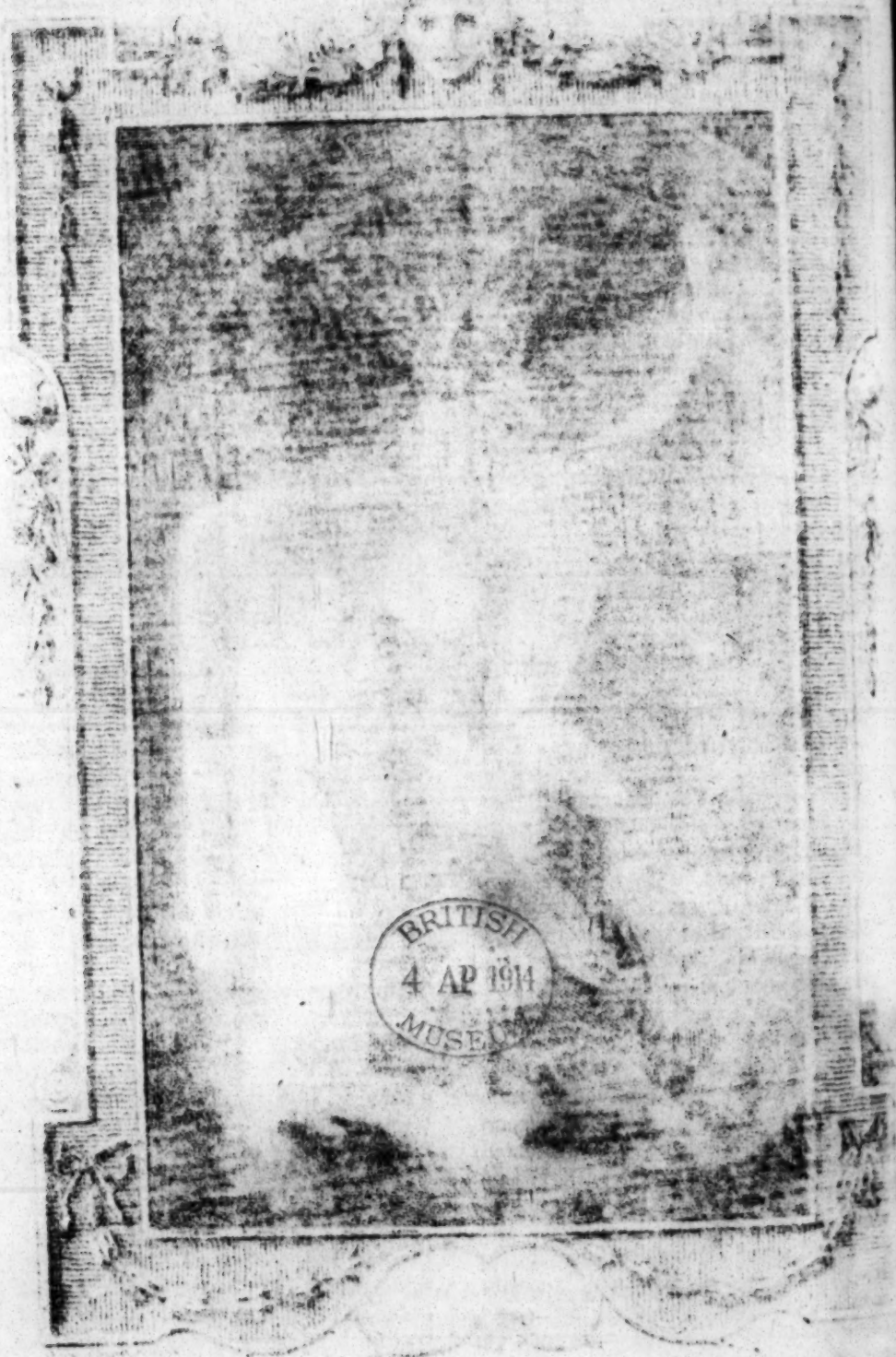
'Take thy wish, then,' cried the Genius, with a look of discontent. 'The contents of this phial will confer immortality on thee, and to-morrow's sun shall behold thee richer than all the kings of the East.' Nourjahad stretched his hands out eagerly to receive a vessel of gold, enriched with precious stones, which the angel took from under his mantle. 'Stop,' cried the aerial being, 'and hear the condition with which thou must accept the wondrous gift I am now about to bestow. Know, then, that your existence here shall equal the date of this sublunary globe; yet, to enjoy life all that while, is not in my power to grant.' Nourjahad was going to interrupt the celestial, to desire him to explain this, when he prevented him, by proceeding thus: 'Your life,' said he, 'will be frequently interrupted by the temporary death of sleep.'—'Doubtless,' replied Nourjahad, 'nature would languish without that sovereign balm.'—'Thou misunderstandst me,' cried the Genius; 'I do not mean that ordinary repose which nature requires: the sleep thou must be subject to, at certain periods, will last for months, years, nay for a whole revolution of Saturn at a time, or perhaps for a century.'—'Frightful!' cried Nourjahad, with an emotion that made him forget the respect which was due to the presence of his guardian angel. He seemed suspended, while the radiant youth proceeded—'It is worth considering; resolve not too hastily.'—'If the frame of man,' replied Nourjahad, 'in the usual course of things, requires, for the support of that short span of life which is allotted to him, a constant and regular portion of sleep, which includes at least one third of his existence; my life, perhaps, stretched so much beyond its natural date, may require a still greater proportion of rest, to preserve my body in due health and vigour. If this be the case, I submit to the conditions; for what is thirty or fifty years out of eternity?'—'Thou art mistaken,' replied the Genius; 'and though thy reasoning is not unphilosophical, yet is it far from reaching the true cause of these mysterious conditions which are offered thee: know, that these are contingencies which depend entirely on thyself.'—'Let me beseech you,' said Nourjahad, 'to explain this.'—'If thou

wakest,' said the Genius, 'in the paths of virtue, thy days will be crowned with gladness, and the even tenor of thy life undisturbed by any evil; but if, on the contrary, thou pervertest the good which is in thy power, and settest thy heart on iniquity, thou wilt thus be occasionally punished by a total privation of thy faculties.'—'If this be all,' cried Nourjahad, 'then am I sure I shall never incur the penalty; for though I mean to enjoy all the pleasures that life can bestow, yet am I a stranger to my own heart, if it ever lead me to the wilful commission of a crime.' The Genius sighed. 'Vouchsafe, then,' proceeded Nourjahad, 'vouchsafe, I conjure you, most adorable and benign spirit, to fulfil your promise, and keep me not longer in suspense.' Saying this, he again reached forth his hand for the golden vessel, which the Genius no longer withheld from him. 'Hold thy nostrils over that phial,' said he, 'and let the fumes of the liquor which it contains ascend to thy brain.' Nourjahad opened the vessel, out of which a vapour issued, of a most exquisite fragrance; it formed a thick atmosphere about his head, and sent out such volatile and sharp effluvia, as made his eyes smart exceedingly, and he was obliged to shut them while he snuffed up the essence. He remained not long in this situation; for the subtle spirit quickly evaporating, the effects instantly ceased, and he opened his eyes; but the apparition was vanished, and his apartment in total darkness. Had not he still found the phial in his hands, which contained the precious liquor, he would have looked on all this as a dream; but so substantial a proof of the reality of what had happened leaving no room for doubts, he returned thanks to his guardian Genius, whom he concluded, though invisible, to be still within hearing; and putting the golden vessel under his pillow, filled as he was with the most delightful ideas, composed himself to sleep.

The sun was at his meridian height when he awoke next day; and the vision of the preceding night immediately recurring to his memory, he sprung hastily from his bed; but how great was his surprize, how high his transports, at seeing the accomplishment of the Genius's promise! His chamber was surrounded with several large urns of polished



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lished brass, some of which were filled with gold coin of different value and impressions; others with ingots of fine gold; and others with precious stones of prodigious size and lustre.

Amazed, enraptured at the sight, he greedily examined his treasures; and looking into each of the urns, one after the other, in one of them he found a scroll of paper, with these words written on it—

'I have fulfilled my promise to thee, O Nourjahad! Thy days are without number, thy riches inexhaustible. Yet cannot I exempt thee from the evils to which all the sons of Adam are subject. I cannot screen thee from the machinations of envy, nor the rapaciousness of power: thy own prudence must henceforth be thy guard. There is a subterraneous cavern in thy garden, where thou mayest conceal thy treasure: I have marked the place, and thou wilt easily find it. Farewel; my charge is at an end.'

'And well hast thou acquitted thyself of this charge, most munificent and benevolent Genius,' cried Nourjahad; 'ten thousand thanks to thee for this last friendly warning. I should be a fool indeed, if I had not sagacity enough to preserve myself against rapaciousness or envy: I will prevent the effects of the first by concealing thee, my precious treasure, thou source of all felicity, where no mortal shall discover thee; and, for the other, my bounty shall disarm it of its sting. Enjoy thyself, Nourjahad; riot in luxurious delights, and laugh at Schem-zeddin's impotent resentment.'

He hastened down into his garden, in order to find the cave; of which he was not long in search. In a remote corner stood the ruins of a small temple, which in former days, before the true religion prevailed in Persia, had been dedicated to the worship of the Gentiles. The vestiges of this little building were so curious, that they were suffered to remain, as an ornament, where they stood. It was raised on a mound; and, according to the custom of idolaters, surrounded with shady trees. On a branch of one of these, Nourjahad perceived hanging a scarf of fine white taffety, to which was suspended a large key of burnished steel.

Nourjahad's eager curiosity soon rendered his diligence successful in finding the door to which this belonged; it was within-side the walls of the temple, and under what formerly seemed to have been the altar. He descended by a few steps into a pretty spacious cavern; and, by groping about, for there was scarce any light, he judged it large enough to contain his treasures.

Whether his guardian Genius had contrived it purely for his use, or whether it had been originally made for some other purpose, he did not trouble himself to enquire; but, glad to have found so safe a place in which to deposit his wealth, he returned to his house; and having given orders that no visitors should approach him, he shut himself up in his chamber for the rest of the day, in order to contemplate his own happiness, and, without interruption, to lay down plans of various pleasures and delights for ages to come.

Whilst Nourjahad was rich only in speculation, he really thought that he should be able to keep his word with the Genius; that the employing his wealth to noble and generous purposes would have constituted great part of his happiness; and that, without plunging into guilt, he could have gratified the utmost of his wishes. But he soon found that his heart had deceived him, and that there is a wide difference between the fancied and actual possession of wealth. He was immediately absorbed in selfishness, and thought of nothing but the indulgence of his own appetites. 'My temper,' said he, as he lay stretched at length on a sofa, 'does not much incline me to take any trouble; I shall therefore never aspire at high employments, nor would I be the sultan of Persia if I might; for what addition would that make to my happiness? None at all; it would only disturb my breast with cares, from which I am now exempt. And which of the real, substantial delights of life, could I then possess, that are not now within my power? I will have a magnificent house in town, and others in the country, with delicious parks and gardens. What does it signify whether or not they are dignified with the names of palaces? or whether I am attended by princes or slaves? The latter will do
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' my business as well, and be more subservient to my will. There are three particulars, indeed, in which I will exceed my master: in the beauties of my seraglio, the delicacies of my table, and the excellence of my musicians. In the former of these especially, King Solomon himself shall be outdone. All parts of the earth shall be explored for women of the most exquisite beauty; art and nature shall combine their utmost efforts to furnish the boundless variety and elegance of my repasts; the sultan's frigid temperance shall not be a pattern to me. Then no fear of surfeits; I may riot to excess, and bid defiance to death.' Here he started, on recollection that he had not requested the Genius to secure him against the attacks of pain or sickness. 'I shall not, however, be impaired by age,' said he, 'and this too, perhaps, is included in his gift. But no matter; since I cannot die, a little temporary pain will make me the more relish my returning health. Then,' added he, 'I will enjoy the charms of musick in its utmost perfection: I will have the universe searched for performers of both sexes; whose exquisite skill, both in instrumental and vocal harmony, shall ravish all hearts. I shall see the line of my posterity past numeration, and all the while enjoy a constant succession of new delights. What more is there wanting to consummate happiness? and who would ever wish to change such an existence for one of which we are entirely ignorant?' Here he paused. 'But are there not,' proceeded he, 'some things called intellectual pleasures; such as Schemzeddin used to talk of to me, and for which, when I was poor, I fancied I had a sort of relish? They may have their charms, and we will not leave them quite out of our plan. I will certainly do abundance of good; besides, I will retain in my family half a score of wise and learned men, to entertain my leisure hours with their discourse: then, when I am weary of living in this country, I will set out, with some chosen companions, to make a tour through the whole earth. There shall not be a spot of the habitable world, which contains any thing worthy of my curiosity, that I will not visit; residing longest in those places

' which I like best: and, by this means, I may pass through two or three centuries, even before I have exhausted the variety of my prospects; after that, I must content myself with such local enjoyments as may fall in my way.'

With such thoughts as these he entertained himself, waiting for the hour when his slaves should be retired to rest, as he had resolved to take that opportunity of burying his treasure.

He had tried the weight of the urns, one by one: those which contained the gold he found so extremely heavy, that it was impossible for him to lift them; those which held the jewels, he could easily carry. Accordingly, when every one in his house was asleep, he loaded himself with his pleasing burdens; and having, from each of the repositories which held the gold, filled several large purses for his immediate expences, he conveyed the rest, by many journeys to and from the cave, all safe to his subterranean treasury; where having locked them up securely, he retired to his apartment, and went to bed.

For the three succeeding days his thoughts were so perplexed and divided, that he knew not which of his favourite schemes he should first enter upon. Satisfied with having the means in his power, he neglected those ends for which he was so desirous of them. 'Shall I,' said he, 'purchase, or set about building for myself a magnificent palace? Shall I dispatch emissaries in search of the most beautiful virgins that can be obtained? and others, at the same time, to procure for me the rarest musicians? My household, meanwhile, may be established, and put on a footing suitable to the grandeur in which I propose to live. I will directly hire a number of domesticks; among which shall be a dozen of the best cooks in Persia, that my table at least may be immediately better supplied than that of the sultan. I am bewildered with such a multiplicity of business; and must find out some person who, without giving me any trouble, will undertake to regulate the economy of all my domestick concerns.'

In these thoughts he was so immersed, that he entirely forgot to pay his court to Schemzeddin; and, without any other enjoyment of his riches than the pleasure of thinking of them, he sat for whole days

days alone, alternately improving on, or rejecting, such systems of happiness as arose in his mind.

The sultan, mean time, offended at his absenting himself, without offering any excuse for it, especially as their last parting had been a cold one, was so disgusted at his behaviour, that he sent one of his officers to forbid him his presence, and charge him never more to appear at court. 'Tell him, however,' said he, 'that I have not so far forgot my former friendship for him, as to see him want a decent support: that house, therefore, in which he now lives, I freely bestow on him; and shall, moreover, allow him a pension of a thousand crowns yearly. Bid him remember, that this is sufficient to supply him with all the sober enjoyments of life.' These being his favourite's own words, the sultan thought proper to remind him of them.

Nourjahad received this message with the utmost indifference, but without daring to shew any mark of disrespect. 'Tell my lord the sultan,' said he, 'that I would not have been thus long without prostrating myself at his feet; but that I was hastily sent for to visit a kinsman, whose dwelling was some leagues from Ormuz; and who, in his last hours, was desirous of seeing me. He died very rich, and has made me his heir. The thousand crowns a year, therefore, my royal master may please to bestow on some one who wants them more, and is more deserving of his bounty, than I. Wretch that I am, to have forfeited my prince's favour! The house that his goodness bestows on me, with all gratitude I thankfully accept, as it will daily remind me that Schemzeddin does not utterly detest his slave.' Saying this, he presented the officer with a handsome diamond, which he took from his finger, and begged him to accept of it as a token of his respect for him, and submission to the sultan's pleasure.

Though Nourjahad had given such a turn to his acceptance of the house, his true reason was, that having his treasure buried in the garden, he thought he could not, without great difficulty, and the hazard of a discovery, remove it. Thus had he already, in two instances, been obliged to depart from truth, in consequence of his ill-judged and pernicious choice.

The house which the sultan had given him was handsome and commodious; and he thought, by enlarging and furnishing it magnificently, it would sufficiently answer the purpose of his town residence; besides, as it was a royal grant, he was sure of remaining unmolested in the possession of it.

He now bent his thoughts on nothing but in giving a loose to his appetites, and indulging without controul in every delight which his passions or imagination could suggest to him. As he was not of an active temper, he put the conduct of his pleasures into the hands of one whom he had lately received into his service. This man, whose name was Hasem, he found had good sense, and a quickness of parts, which he thought qualified him for the trust he reposed in him. To him he committed the care of regulating his family, and appointed him the director of his household. In short, under Hasem's inspection, who on this occasion displayed an admirable taste, his house was soon furnished with every thing that could charm the senses, or captivate the fancy. Costly furniture, magnificent habits, sumptuous equipages, and a grand retinue, fully gratified his vanity. By Hasem's diligence, his seraglio was soon adorned with a number of the most beautiful female slaves, of almost every nation, whom he purchased at a vast expence; by Hasem's care, his board was replenished with the most delicious products of every climate; by Hasem's management, he had a chosen band of the most skilful musicians of the age; and, by Hasem's judgment and address, he had retained in his house some of the most learned and ingenious men of all Persia, skilled in every art and science. These were received into his family for the instruction and entertainment of his hours of reflection, if he should chance to be visited with any such.

Behold him now arrived at the height of human felicity; for, to render his happiness incapable of addition, he had distinguished, among the beauties of his seraglio, a young maid, so exquisitely charming and accomplished, that he gave her the entire possession of his heart; and, preferring her to the rest of his women, passed whole days in her apartment. By Mandana he found himself equally beloved; a felicity very rare among Eastern husbands; and, longing

to unbosom himself to one on whose tenderness and fidelity he could rely, to her he disclosed the marvellous story of his destiny. His mind, thus disburthened of this important secret, which he had often longed to divulge, but could find none whom he dared to trust with the discovery, he had not one anxious thought remaining: he gave himself up to pleasures; he threw off all restraint; he plunged at once into a tide of luxurious enjoyments; he forgot his duty towards God, and neglected all the laws of his prophet. He grew lazy and effeminate; and had not his pride now and then urged him to display to the wondering eyes of the publick the magnificence of his state, he would seldom have been inclined to go out of his house.

Thus possessed of every thing that his soul could wish, he continued, for the space of three moons, without any interruption, to wallow in voluptuousness: when one morning, just as he was preparing to set out for a beautiful villa, which Halem had recommended to him for his rural retirement, and which he purposed to buy if it answered his description, he was prevented by a messenger from the sultan. It was the same person who once before had been sent to him, to forbid him the court. 'I am sorry, my lord,' said he, on entering Nourjahad's apartment, 'to be a second time the bearer of unwelcome tidings; but Schemzeddin, hearing of the extraordinary grandeur and magnificence in which you live, a magnificence indeed equal to that of the sultan himself, would needs know whence you derive your wealth, which seems so much to surpass that of any of his subjects; and has commanded me to conduct you to his presence, in order to give an account of it.'

Nourjahad was exceedingly startled at this unexpected summons; but it was in vain to dispute the sultan's orders; and he was forced, though with great reluctance, to accompany the officer to the palace of Schemzeddin.

He entered it trembling, fearful to declare a falsehood to his sovereign, yet still more unwilling to confess the truth.

In this suspense the officer left him, to acquaint the sultan of his arrival. He waited not long before he was admitted to the royal presence.

'Whence is it, Nourjahad,' said the sultan, 'that thy imprudence hath drawn on thee the attention of my whole empire; insomuch, that the representations made to me of thy pomp and luxury now renders it necessary to enquire into thy riches? They seem indeed to be immense: who was that relation that bequeathed them to thee; and wherein do they consist?'

Though Nourjahad had endeavoured to prepare himself with proper answers to all those questions which he naturally expected would be asked on the occasion, he was nevertheless confounded; he could not utter the lyes he had framed with the unabashed look of sincerity; his speech faltered, and his colour changed. Schemzeddin saw his confusion. 'I perceive,' said he, 'there is some mystery in this affair which thou hast no mind to discover. I pray Heaven that thou hast used no sinister means to come at the great wealth which I am told thou possessest. Confess the truth; and beware of prevaricating with thy prince.'

Nourjahad, frightened at the difficulties he found himself involved in, fell at the sultan's feet. 'If my lord,' said he, 'will give me a patient hearing, and forgive the presumption of his servant, I will unfold such wonders as will amaze him, and at the same time utter nothing but the strictest truth.' The sultan turned coldly towards him; but, by seeming to attend to his explanation, encouraged him to proceed.

He then gave a faithful relation of the vision he had seen, with all the consequences of that miraculous event. Schemzeddin suffered him to conclude his narration without interruption; but, instead of shewing any marks of surprise, or appearing to credit what he said, looking at him with the utmost indignation—'Audacious wretch,' cried he, 'how darest thou presume thus to abuse my patience, and affront my understanding with the relation of so ridiculous a forgery? Go, tell thy incredible tales to fools and children, but dare not to insult thy sovereign with such outrageous falsehoods.'

Though Nourjahad was terrified at the sultan's anger, he nevertheless persisted in his declaration, confirming all he had said by the most solemn oaths. The sultan commanded him to be silent.

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'Thou art mad,' said he; 'I perceive now that the riches thou hast acquired, let the means be what they may, have turned thy brain; and I am now more than ever convinced of the sordidness of thy mind, when the unexpected acquisition of a little wealth could thus pervert thy judgment, and teach thee to impose on thy master for truth, the monstrous chimeras of thy wild fancy. Thy folly be on thy head; for a little, a very little time must, with the unbounded extravagance of which thou art guilty, dissipate what thy friend hath left thee; and when thou art again reduced to thy former state, thou wilt be glad to sue to my bounty for that which thou didst lately with so much arrogance reject. Go, unhappy Nourjahad,' continued he, his voice a little softened, 'the remembrance of what thou once wert to me, will not permit me to see thee fall a victim to thy own desperate folly. Should it be publicly known that thou hast thus endeavoured by lyes and profanation to abuse the credulity of thy prince, thou wouldst find that thy boasted immortality would not be proof against that death, which he should think himself obliged, in justice to his own honour and dignity, to inflict on so bold an impostor. Hence, miserable man,' pursued he, 'retire to thy house; and, if thou art not quite abandoned, endeavour, by a sober and regular conduct, to expiate thy offences against Heaven and thy sovereign; but, as a punishment for thy crime, presume not, without my leave, to stir beyond the limits of thy own habitation, on pain of a more rigorous and lasting confinement.'

Nourjahad, thunderstruck at this unexpected sentence, was unable to reply; and the sultan having ordered the captain of his guards to be called, committed his prisoner to his hands; telling him, if he suffered Nourjahad to escape, his head should answer it.

Filled with resentment and discontent, Nourjahad was conducted back to his own house; at all the avenues of which he had the mortification to see guards posted; agreeably to the charge given by the sultan.

He retired pensively to his closet, where, shutting himself up, he now for the first time repented of his indiscretion in the choice he had made.

'Unfortunate that I am!' cried he, 'what will riches or length of days avail me, if I am thus to be miserably immured within the walls of my own dwelling? Would it not have been better for me to have requested the Genius to restore me to the favour of my prince? Schemzeddin always loved me, and would not fail to have promoted me to wealth and honours; meanwhile, I should have enjoyed my liberty, which now, methinks, as I am debarred of it, appears to me a greater blessing than any I possess. Unhappy Nourjahad! what is become of all thy schemes of felicity!' He was even weak enough to shed tears, and gave himself up to vexation for the remainder of the day.

His mind, however, was by pleasure rendered too volatile to suffer any thing to make a lasting impression on him; and he had still too many resources of happiness in his power, to give himself up to despair. 'It is true,' said he, 'I am debarred of my liberty, but have I not still a thousand delights in my possession? The incredulous sultan, satisfied with punishing me, will give himself no farther concern about me, provided I do not attempt to escape; and, thus withdrawn from the publick eye, envy will not endeavour to penetrate into the recesses of a private dwelling. I will secure the fidelity of my servants by my liberality towards them. Schemzeddin's resentment will not last; or, if it should, even as long as he lives, what is his life, the scanty portion of years allotted to common men, to my promised immortality?'

Having thus reconciled his thoughts to his present situation, he resolved, in order to make himself amends for the restraint on his person, to indulge himself with an unbounded freedom in his most voluptuous wishes. He commanded a banquet to be prepared for him that night, which exceeded, in luxury and profusion, any of the preceding. He ordered all his women, of which he had a great number, adorned with jewels, and dressed in their richest habits, to attend on him while he was at supper, permitting none but Mandana the favour to sit down with him. The magnificence of his apartments were heightened by a splendid illumination of a thousand torches, composed of odoriferous gums, which cast a blaze of light that vied with the glories of the

the sun. His musicians, both vocal and instrumental, were ordered to exert the utmost stretch of their art, and to soothe his mind with all the enchanting powers of harmony. Himself, attired in robes such as the kings of Persia were used to wear, was seated under a canopy of silver tissue, which he had put up for the purpose; and, assuming the pomp of an Eastern monarch, suffered the illusion to take such possession of his mind, that, if he were not before mad, he now seemed to be very near distraction.

Intoxicated with pleasure, the historian who writes his life affirms, that this night Nourjahad, for the first time, got drunk.

Be that as it may, it is certain that, having retired to rest, he slept sounder and longer than usual; for, on his awaking, and missing Mandana from his side, whom he had made the partner of his bed, he called out to the slave who always attended in his anti-chamber, in order to enquire for her, resolving to chide her tenderly for leaving him.

He called loud and often; but nobody answering him, as he was naturally choleric, he jumped out of bed, and stepping hastily into the outer chamber, he found that none of the slaves were in waiting. Enraged at this neglect, he called several of his domesticks by their names, one after another; when at length, after he was almost out of breath with passion, a female slave appeared, who was one of those appointed to wait on Mandana.

The damsel no sooner perceived him, than giving a loud shriek, she was about to run away; when Nourjahad, provoked at her behaviour, catching her roughly by the arm—'Where is thy mistress?' said he; 'and whence arises that terror and amazement in thy countenance?'—'Alas! my lord,' answered the slave, 'pardon my surprize, which is occasioned by my seeing you so unexpectedly.' Nourjahad now perceiving that in his hurry he had forgot to put on his cloaths, concluded that it was that circumstance which had alarmed the damsel; and turning from her—'Foolish woman,' said he, 'go tell Mandana that I desire to see her.'—'Ah, my lord,' replied the maid, 'I would she were in a condition to come to you.'—'Why, what is the matter?' said Nourjahad; 'no ill, I hope, has befallen the dear light of my life? Is she sick? Methinks she

went to bed last night in perfect health.'—'Last night! my lord,' replied the slave, and shook her head. 'Trifler,' cried Nourjahad, 'what means that motion? Where is thy mistress? Speak!'—'She is, I hope,' said the slave, 'gone to receive the reward of her goodness!' Here she began to weep. 'O Heaven!' cried Nourjahad, 'is my dear Mandana dead?'—'She is,' answered the damsel, redoubling her tears, 'and I shall never have so kind a mistress.'

'Alas!' replied Nourjahad, 'by what fatal accident am I thus suddenly deprived of the adorable creature?'

'It was not suddenly, my lord,' replied the slave; 'Mandana died in child-bed.'—'Ah, traitress!' cried Nourjahad, 'how darest thou thus mock the sorrow of thy master, and traduce the chastity of my beloved! Thou knowest it is not more than three moons since I received her a virgin to my arms; and dost thou presume to impute so ridiculous a story on me as that of her having died in child-bed?'—'My lord,' answered the slave, 'it is more than three years since Mandana died.'—'Audacious wretch!' cried Nourjahad, 'wouldst thou persuade me out of my senses?' With this he pinched the slave so hard by the arm, that she screamed out.

The noise she made brought several of the servants into the room; who, on seeing Nourjahad, all shewed manifest tokens of fear and surprize. 'What is the reason of all this?' cried he out in a rage; 'are ye all leagued in combination against me? Be quick, and explain to me the cause of this distraction which appears amongst you.'

Hafem, who had run in among the other domesticks, took upon him to answer for the rest. 'It is not to be wondered at, my lord,' said he, 'that your slaves seem surprized at seeing you thus as it were raised from the dead; but if they are amazed, their joy, doubtless, is equal to their wonder: mine, I am sure, is unutterable, to behold my lord once more restored to his faithful servants, after we had almost despaired of your ever more unclosing your eyes.'

'You talk strangely,' said Nourjahad, a little staggered at what he saw and heard. He just then recollected the terms on which he had received the important gift from the Genius; and began to suspect

spect that he had endured one of those preternatural slumbers to which he had subjected himself. 'How long may I have slept?' said he. 'Four years and twenty days exactly,' answered Hasem; 'I have reason to know, for I counted the melancholy hours as they passed, and seldom quitted your bed-side.'— 'It may be so,' said Nourjahad; 'I have been subject to these trances from a boy, but this has lasted rather longer than usual.' He then commanded all his slaves to withdraw, retaining only Hasem, with whom he wanted to have some discourse.

'Tell me now,' said he, when they were alone, 'and tell me truly, is all I have heard real? and is Mandana actually dead?'— 'Too true, my lord,' replied Hasem: 'Mandana died in child-bed; and, dying, left her infant son to my care.'— 'Is my child alive?' said Nourjahad eagerly. 'He is, my lord,' answered Hasem, 'and you shall see him presently. Mandana called me to her,' continued he, 'when she found herself dying—'

"Hasem," said she, "be careful of your lord; Heaven will one day restore him to you again. See that you manage his household with the same prudence and regularity that you would if he himself were to inspect into your conduct; for be assured he will sooner or later exact a just account of your proceedings. Here are the keys of his coffers: I ventured to take them from under his pillow, where I knew he kept them. I have husbanded his fortune with œconomy, and have hitherto kept order and harmony in his family: on you it rests to preserve it in the same condition. Nourjahad will not fail to reward your diligence and fidelity. It is not expedient that any one should know the condition to which he is reduced. His life is governed by a strange fatality. You have nothing to do, therefore, but to give out that he is seized with a lingering distemper, which confines him to his bed. Let no impertinent enquirers see him, and all curiosity about him will soon cease." These, proceeded Hasem, 'were almost the last words that my beloved mistress spoke. I have punctually complied with her orders. Your condition has been kept a profound secret from every one but your own family, and they all

love you too well to betray their trust. Your women are all immured within the sacred walls of your seraglio; and, though they murmur at their situation, they fail not to offer up their daily prayers that Heaven would restore you to them. I will now,' continued he, 'present your son to you; it will be some consolation to you to see that charming pledge of Mandana's love.' Saying this, he withdrew; but soon returned, leading in the child, who was as beautiful as a little cherub.

Nourjahad melted into tears at the sight of him, and renewed his complaints for the loss of his adored Mandana. He saw that the child's age seemed to agree exactly with the account he had received; and now, fully convinced of the truth of his misfortune, 'O Heaven!' cried he, clasping the young boy to his bosom, 'what would I give that my dear Mandana were now here to partake of the pleasure I feel in this infant's caresses! Gladly would I consent to have three ages cut off from the number of my years, to have her more precious life restored. But my felicity would then be too great, and I must submit to the destiny which I myself have chosen.—' 'Prudent Hasem,' said he, observing he looked surprized, 'thou dost wonder at the words which thou hast heard me speak, but I will not conceal from thee the marvellous story of my life. Thy fidelity and zeal deserve this confidence; besides, it is requisite that I should trust some discreet person with my important secret, since Mandana, on whose tenderness and loyalty I could depend, is no more.'

Nourjahad then acquainted Hasem with the wonderful mystery of his life. He did not, however, divulge the circumstance of his concealed treasure; he judged from his own heart, that it would not be altogether advisable to lay such a tempting bait in the way even of the most virtuous and steady mind; but contented himself with telling him that his Genius constantly supplied him with riches, as his occasions required. Hasem listened to him with astonishment; but assured him, after what had already passed, he doubted not a tittle of the truth of what he had been told, amazing and almost incredible as it appeared.

'My lord,' said he, 'you may securely rely on my zeal and diligence, so long as you are pleased to entertain me

me in your service.'—'That I shall do during your life,' interrupted Nourjahad. 'But,' replied Hasem, 'what if one of those unmerciful long trances should continue for a length of time much beyond that from which you are but now awakened, and that I should happen to die before you recover your senses; who knows, in that case, what might be the consequences?'—'It is an accident exceedingly to be dreaded,' replied Nourjahad; 'Heaven knows to what indignities I might be exposed, perhaps to be buried alive, and condemned to pass a century or two in a dismal sepulchre. The thought makes me shudder, and I almost repent of having accepted life on such conditions. As I have no warning,' continued he, 'when those fatal slumbers will overpower me, (for who can always be guarded against the starts of passion, or what man is so attentive to that impertinent monitor within, as to hear his whispers amidst the hurry of tumultuous pleasures?) As I know not, I say, when I am to be condemned to that state of insensibility, or how long I shall continue in it, I can only conjure thee, if I should happen to be seized with another trance during thy life, which, considering my disposition, is not impossible, that thou wilt observe the same conduct which thou hast lately done; and, if the angel of death should summon thee away before my senses are loosed from their mysterious bands, that thou wilt with thy dying breath commit the secret to some one faithful person of my family, whom thou thinkest most fit to be relied on for a punctual discharge of their duty. As I shall never part with any of my servants till the inevitable stroke of death separates them from me, and shall constantly supply their places with the worthiest persons that can be found, I think I cannot fail of a succession of people, from amongst whom, one at least may always be found, in whose secrecy and truth I may safely confide.'

'Without doubt, my lord,' answered Hasem, 'you may, by such wise measures as these, be always guarded against the worst that may befall you.'

Though Nourjahad had, by thus providing against evil events, exceedingly relieved his mind from the fears by which

it was agitated, lest any ill should happen to him during his slumbers; yet was his heart far from being at ease. The loss of Mandana preyed upon his spirits. He had no relish for the charms of his other women; Mandana's superior loveliness was always present to his eyes. The delicacies of his table grew tasteless; Mandana's sprightly wit was wanting to give a relish to the feast. The melodious concerts of musick, with which he was wont to be so delighted, now only served to overwhelm him with melancholy: Mandana's enchanting voice was not heard, which used to swell his heart to rapture.

In short, for a time, he took pleasure in nothing but the caresses and innocent prattle of his little son, whom, by his tenderness and endearments, he had taught to love him.

'I am unhappy, my dear Hasem,' would he often say: 'the loss of Mandana embitters all my joys; and, methinks, I begin to look forward with disgust.'

'My lord,' said Hasem, 'there is nothing which has befallen you but what is common to all. Every one may naturally expect to see the death of some person or other whom they love; but you, who are endowed with so miraculous a life, must needs look to drop a tear over a thousand graves.'

'Melancholy reflection!' said Nourjahad; 'it occurred not to me in this light when I made my choice. I knew indeed I must of necessity bury hundreds of succeeding generations: but,' said I to myself, 'I shall insensibly contract new amities, as I perceive the old ones are likely to be dissolved by the hand of time. My heart,' said I, 'shall never feel a vacuity, for want of fit objects of desire. A new beauty will naturally take place of her whose charms begin to decline: thus the ardours of love will be supplied with perpetual fuel; and upon the same principle will the social joys of friendship be unremitting. I considered the world as a flower-garden, the product of which was to delight my senses for a certain season. The bloom is not made to last,' thought I, 'but it will be succeeded by a fresh blow, whose sweetness and variety will equal the former, and entirely obliterate them from my memory. I thought not,

alast

'alas! that, before the spring ended, a cruel blast might suddenly destroy my fairest flower.'

'Would you, my lord,' said Hasem, 'if it were in your power, absolve your Genius from his promise, seeing your life must be perpetually subject to such misfortunes?'

'Not so neither,' answered Nourjahad; 'time is a never-failing remedy for grief: I shall get over this, and be better prepared against the next assault of evil.'

In effect, Nourjahad kept his word, and soon returned to his former way of living.

He had the mortification, however, to find himself still a prisoner. Hasem told him that the sultan had not yet taken off the restraint under which he had formerly laid him; and, whether it was through forgetfulness or design, the guards still maintained their posts about his house. This Nourjahad was himself convinced of, by seeing them from his windows.

'It is strange,' said he, 'that Schemzeddin should retain his resentment against me for so long a time; especially, as he might have been convinced of the truth of what I asserted by the extraordinary state in which I have lain all this while.'—'You forget, my lord,' said Hasem, 'that this was an absolute secret, no one from under your own roof knowing a word of the matter. Such were Mandana's last injunctions, and your faithful servants never divulged a tittle of it.'

'Did not my friends come to visit me,' said Nourjahad, 'during that interval in which I slept?'—'Those whom you called your friends,' answered Hasem, 'came, as usual, during the first month of your dormant state; but being refused admittance, under pretence that your health was so much declined, that you were not in a condition to receive them, they soon desisted from their visits; and, finding they could no more be entertained with feasting and jollity, they have never since inquired after you.'

'Ungrateful wretches!' said Nourjahad, 'I cast them off for ever. Yet it is an irksome thing to live without friends. You, Hasem, are a prudent and honest man, but still you are my servant; I cannot therefore consider you on that footing of equality which friendship

requires.'—'There is one man,' said Hasem, 'who has shewn himself grateful and compassionate; and those two virtues never come alone, but are ever found attended with many others.'—'Oh, name him,' said Nourjahad. 'It is Zamgrad,' replied Hasem, 'that officer of the sultan's whom you once obliged by a trifling present of a ring: he never fails sending every day to enquire after your welfare; nay, he has often called himself, and expressed an honest sorrow for the ill state of health to which I told him you were reduced, tenderly blaming the sultan for his rigorous confinement of you.'

'Worthy Zamgrad!' said Nourjahad; 'thou, thou alone, shalt be the chosen friend of my heart. The rest of my worthless acquaintance I from this minute discard.'

'I will write to Schemzeddin,' pursued he; 'perhaps he may now relent, and restore me to my liberty. I long to shift the scene, and remove to some place where Mandana's image may not be so often revived in my memory. Wert thou not, Hasem, about to procure for me a noble seat in the country, which I was going to take a view of that day on which the good Zamgrad came to carry me before the sultan? If I might but retire thither, I should think myself happy.'

'Alas, my lord,' replied Hasem, 'that fine seat cannot now be yours. You may remember I made only a conditional agreement with the owner of it, depending on your approbation of the place after your having seen it.'—'I recollect it,' said Nourjahad; 'but may it not still be mine?'—'By no means,' answered Hasem; 'the owner has long since disposed of it to another.'

'That is unlucky,' said Nourjahad; 'but we can easily find another. Be it your care to look out for one, while I endeavour to move the sultan in my favour.'

Hasem was not slow in executing his master's orders. In three days he told him he had seen a villa, which seemed to him to surpass all the descriptions of Eden in it's primary state of beauty. 'It is but at the distance of ten leagues from Ormuz,' said he. 'The house and gardens are in compleat order; and you may purchase the whole for fifty thousand pieces of gold. The sultan himself hath not in his possession

‘sion any thing more delightful.’—‘I will have it,’ said Nourjahad: ‘get the money ready; you have the keys of my coffers, and they contain more than that sum.’

‘My lord,’ answered Hasem, ‘when you last saw them, they did contain much more; but you will be pleased to recollect, that it is above four years since, and that your household has been maintained during that time; which, notwithstanding I have used the utmost œconomy, must needs have somewhat diminished your treasury.’—‘I had forgot,’ replied Nourjahad, ‘but I will soon supply you with the gold you want.’

Accordingly he paid a visit to the subterraneous cave that very night; where finding every thing as he had left it, he loaded himself with a quantity of gold sufficient to prevent the necessity of drawing from his hidden store of wealth for a considerable time.

Intent now on the pursuit of his pleasures, he neglected not applying to the sultan for a repeal, or at least a mitigation of his sentence. He writ to Schemzeddin a letter in terms full of humility; thinking, if he could remove his incredulity, by convincing him that the extraordinary fact he had related was nothing more than the truth, that the sultan would no longer deny him his liberty. He scrupled not to acquaint him, that he had been for more than four years in a profound sleep: for the confirmation of which fact, strange as it might seem to his majesty, he desired leave to appeal to every one of his own household; and conjured the sultan to take the trouble of informing himself more fully from some of his people, whom he might cause to be brought into his presence, and privately examined; as he confessed he did not wish to have so uncommon an event divulged.

Nourjahad, from this expedient, had great hopes of obtaining his desire; but the event turned out contrary to his expectations.

Zamgrad, two days after, brought him an answer from the sultan in writing. Nourjahad laid the paper on his head; then kissing the seals, he broke them open, and read as follows:

‘I have not been unmindful of thy motions; and I was pleased to hear from time to time, that, for these four years past, order and decency have

been preserved in thy dwelling. I flattered myself that this was owing to thy having returned to a sense of thy duty; but my hope deceived me, when I found that Nourjahad was, by a violent malady which seized him, (doubtless the effects of his intemperance) disqualified from indulging in those excesses in which he was wont to riot.

‘This visitation from Heaven, I thought, would have produced salutary effects on thy mind; and hoped, if the angel of health were again to revisit thy pillow, that thou wouldst make a different use of thy recovered strength. How must my indignation, then, be roused against thee, abandoned as thou art to perdition, to find thou persistest in thy enormous folly and wickedness, and continuest to abuse the patience of thy benefactor and sovereign master with such unparalleled falsehoods! A prince less merciful than myself would no longer delay to punish thee with death: but I give thee thy wretched life; spend it, if thou canst, in penitence. Nay, I will so far indulge thee, as to permit thee, for the more perfect recovery of thy health, to retire to thy house in the country; but, at the peril of thy head, presume not to stir beyond the bounds of thy own habitation.’

Nourjahad now too late found his error, in endeavouring to force belief of a thing which appeared so incredible; and wished he had rather availed himself of the sultan’s prepossessions in favour of the story propagated by his servants, as he found that would have been the wiser course.

‘What a world is this,’ said he to Zamgrad, after having read the letter, ‘where he who ought to be the rewarder of truth, and the dispenser of justice, shuts his ears against conviction, and condemns an innocent man for endeavouring to set him right! But I will not involve you in the punishment imposed on my imaginary guilt, by requiring your belief of what I have in vain endeavoured to convince the incredulous Schemzeddin.’

‘I know not, my lord,’ replied Zamgrad, ‘what has passed between the sultan and you: of this only I am certain, that he seems exceedingly enraged against you. I would it were in my power, from the respect I bear you, to mitigate his resentment.’

‘I thank

'I thank thee, gentle Zamgrad,' said Nourjahad; 'I find thou, of all my numerous acquaintance, art the only man who has shewn any attachment to me. If the friendship of one labouring under the displeasure of his prince be worth thy accepting, I offer thee mine, and conjure thee to grant me yours in return. The base ingratitude I have already experienced from the rest of my pretended friends, has determined me to disclaim all society with them: if thou wilt sometimes visit me in my retirement, thou wilt find Nourjahad not undeserving of thy kindness.'

Zamgrad promised to see him as often as he could, and took his leave.

However vexed Nourjahad was at his disappointment, in finding himself, by being still debarred of his liberty, deprived, for a time at least, from executing one of his favourite purposes, that of travelling all over the world; he yet contented himself with the reflection, that this project was only postponed to another opportunity; and that he should have time enough for executing his design after Schemzeddin, and many of his posterity, were in their graves. 'I will not waste my hours,' said he, 'in fruitless languishment for what I cannot at present attain, but make the most of the good which now offers itself to my acceptance.'

He ordered Hasem to pay down the money forthwith for that fine seat. 'I will remove thither,' said he, 'immediately; and make myself some recompence, by all the means that art can devise, for that cruel, long trance, which overpowered me so unseasonably: I hope I shall not be visited by another for these fifty or sixty years at least.'

Hasem's diligence kept pace with his lord's impatience: he got every thing in readiness for his reception at his rural mansion; and, to avoid the notice which might be taken of so numerous a seraglio, and such a train of domesticks, the prudent Hasem advised that they should set out and travel by night. 'This precaution,' said he, 'will prevent the malice of your enemies from making ill-natured representations of your conduct to the sultan; and as you yourself are supposed by every body in Ormuz to have laboured under a long and painful illness, I think, to give colour to this report, it would be most advise-

able for you to be carried in a litter.' As Nourjahad loved his ease, he readily enough consented to this proposal; and in this manner suffered himself to be conveyed to his new habitation.

On his arrival, he found Hasem had not exaggerated in his description of this place. The house, or rather palace, for such it might be called, infinitely exceeded his expectations; but, above all, the gardens were so delicious, that his senses were ravished with delight: he declared, that those mansions of joy prepared for the reception of the faithful could not exceed them; and, forgetting that this paradise was to be his prison, he ordered that a pavilion of light brocade should be reared for him in the midst of his garden, where he purposed to enjoy the cool hours of the evening, amidst the noise of falling waters, and the wild notes of innumerable birds who had taken up their residence in this terrestrial paradise.

Behold him now once more in the possession of every thing for which the heart of man, in the wildest wishes of Epicurean phrenzy, could pant. He gave the reins to his passions; he again became the slave of voluptuous appetites; he submitted a second time to the power of beauty; he invented new modes of luxury; and his delightful abode became the scene of every licentious pleasure.

The delicacies and profusion in which he himself wallowed, made him forget that there were wants or miseries among his fellow-creatures; and, as he had but little intercourse with mankind, except with those who flattered his follies, or administered to his loose pleasures, he became hardened to all the social affections: he ceased to relieve the poor, because they never came in his way; and, with a heart naturally generous and benevolent, he lived only for himself.

Immersed in sensual gratifications, he lost all relish for any others. The poets and sages, whom he entertained in his house, began to grow irksome to him: he derided the wisdom and philosophy of the latter; and, if they attempted to entertain him with learned or grave discourses, he laughed at them; and, at length, thinking their company tedious, he turned them out of his house.

His bards would have shared the same fate, if they had not, by a timely address, rendered their art subservient to his depraved inclinations. They composed

posed nothing but pieces, filled with adulation, on himself, or light verses in praise of one or other of his mistresses; these were set to melting airs, and sung accompanied by the lute.

Thus did Nourjahad pass his days. Every rising sun beheld some fresh outrage on the laws of temperance and decency; and the shades of every night descended on his unatoned offences.

The delightful season of the year, winged with pleasures, was now almost fled, when one of the most extravagant projects came into the head of Nourjahad that ever entered the imagination of man.

As the gardens of his palace were exceedingly delicious, he vainly fancied that they must be very like the regions of paradise, (where all good Mussulmen are received after death;) and that, in order to make the resemblance perfectly complete, he would cause the women of his seraglio to personate the Houris, those beautiful virgins who are given as a reward to all true believers. He himself would needs represent Mahomet; and one of his mistresses whom he loved best, and who was indeed the handsomest of them, he would have to appear under the name and character of Cadiga, the favourite wife of the great Prophet.

The idea, wild and profane as it was, was notwithstanding readily adopted by all the people about him, no one presuming to dispute his will. Nor were the women on this occasion much inclined to do so, as it served them for a very agreeable amusement.

Some debates however arose among them on account of the dresses proper to be worn on this occasion, as none of them remembered to have read in the Koran what sort of habits the Houris wore; and some of the ladies gave it as their opinion, that those beauties went naked.

After many disputes on the subject, however, they struck a sort of medium, and agreed to be attired in loose robes of the thinnest Persian gauze, with chaplets of flowers on their heads.

Nourjahad approved of the invention, and gave orders to Hasem to prepare for this celestial masquerade with all possible diligence; charging him to leave nothing out that could render the entertainment worthy of Mahomet himself.

Neither art nor expence were spared on this extraordinary occasion. He gave

commandment that the fountains which adorned his garden should be so contrived, that, instead of water, they should pour forth milk and wine; that the seasons should be anticipated, and the early fragrance of the spring should be united with the more vivid colours of the glowing summer. In short, that fruits, blossoms, and flowers, should at once unite their various beauties, to embellish this terrestrial paradise.

The diligence of Hasem was so active, that every thing was got in readiness, even sooner than Nourjahad expected. He descended into his garden to take a survey of these wondrous preparations; and, finding all exactly to his mind, he gave orders to his women to hold themselves prepared to act their parts; telling them, that on that very evening he would give them a foretaste of the ravishing pleasures they were to enjoy in the happy regions of light.

The weather was extremely hot; and Nourjahad, in order to take a view of the magnificent decorations, having fatigued himself with wandering through his elysium, retired to his apartment, and threw himself down on a sofa, with intent to take a short repose, the better to prepare himself for the excesses of the night; leaving orders with Hasem and Cadiga to awake him from sleep before sun-set.

Nourjahad, however, opened his eyes without any one's having roused him from his slumbers; when perceiving that the day was almost closed, and finding that his commands had been neglected, he flew into a violent passion, suspecting that his women had prevailed on Hasem to grant them this opportunity, while he slept, of indulging themselves in liberties without that restraint to which they were accustomed in his presence.

Enraged at the thought, he resolved to have them called before him; and after severely reprimanding them, and punishing Hasem proportionally to his fault, to have his women all locked up, and postpone his festivity till he was in a better humour to relish it.

Impatient, and even furious at his disappointment, he stamped on the floor with his foot; when immediately a black eunuch presented himself at the door. 'Go,' said he, his words almost choked with indignation, 'go and bid my women, one and all, hasten directly into my presence.'

The

The slave retired in respectful silence; and presently after all the ladies of his seraglio entered his apartment. They were, according to the custom, covered with veils; but, on appearing in their lord's presence, they threw them off. But, O Heaven! what was Nourjahad's anger and astonishment, when, instead of the beautiful Houris whom he expected to see, he beheld a train of wrinkled and deformed old hags!

Amazement and rage for a while suspended the power of speech: when the foremost of the old women approaching, and offering to embrace him, he thrust her rudely from him—'Detestable fiend!' said he, 'whence this presumption? Where are my slaves? Where is Hasem, and the women of my seraglio? The traitresses! they shall pay dearly for thus abusing my indulgence.'

The old women at this all fell upon their faces to the ground; but the first who had advanced addressing herself to speak—'Avaunt!' cried Nourjahad, 'begone wretches, and rid my sight of such hideous aspects.'

'Alas, my lord!' replied the old woman, 'have you entirely forgot me? has time left no traces to remind you of your once beloved Cadiga?'—'Cadiga! thou Cadiga? Do not provoke me,' said Nourjahad, 'or, by Allah, I'll spurn thee with my foot.'

The old women now all set up a lamentable cry: 'Miserable wretches that we are,' said they, beating their withered breasts, 'it had been happy for us if we had all died in our youth, rather than have thus out-lived our lord's affections!'

'Evil betide ye,' said Nourjahad, 'who in the name of deformity are ye all?' Hereupon the beldames cried out with one voice, 'Your mistresses! the once admired and loved partners of your bed; but the relentless hand of time has made such cruel ravages on our charms, that we do not wonder thou shouldst find it impossible to recollect us.'

Nourjahad now began to suspect that he had been overpowered by a second trance. 'Why, how long, in the devil's name, have I then slept?' said he.

'Forty years and eleven moons,' answered the lady who called herself Cadiga. 'Thou liest, I am sure,' said Nourjahad, 'for it appears to me but as yesterday since I ordered thee (if thou

really art Cadiga) to awake me at a certain hour, that I might enjoy the glorious entertainment prepared for me in the gardens of the Houris.'

'I do remember it,' said Cadiga, 'and we your faithful slaves were to personate those beautiful virgins. Alas, alas! we are not now fit to represent those daughters of paradise!'—'Thou art fitter,' said Nourjahad, 'to represent the furies. I tell thee again, it cannot be many hours since I first fell into a slumber.'

'It may well seem so,' answered Cadiga, 'buried as your senses have been in forgetfulness, and every faculty consigned to oblivion, that the interval of time so past must be quite annihilated; yet it is most certain that you have slept as long as I tell you.'

Nourjahad upon this examined the faces of the old women one after the other, but finding them so totally different from what they once were, he swore that he did not believe a word they said.

'Thou Cadiga!' said he, 'the black-browed Cadiga, whose enchanting smiles beguiled all hearts; thou art wondrously like her I confess!'

'Yet, that I am that identical fair one,' answered she, 'I shall be able to convince you, from a remarkable signature which I bear on my bosom, and which still remains, though the rest of my person is so entirely changed.'

Saying this, she uncovered her breast, on which the figure of a rose-bud was delineated by the hand of nature. Nourjahad well remembered the mark; he had once thought it a beauty, and made it the subject of an amorous sonnet, when the bosom of the fair Cadiga was as white and as smooth as alabaster.

Convinced by this proof, that these women were really what they pretended to be, Nourjahad could not conceal his vexation. 'By the Temple of Mecca,' said he, 'this Genius of mine is no better than he should be, and I begin to suspect he is little less than an evil spirit, or he could not thus take delight in persecuting me for nothing.'

'Ah, my lord,' said Cadiga, 'I am not ignorant of the strange fate by which your life is governed. Hasem, your faithful Hasem, communicated the secret to me with his dying breath.'—'Is Hasem dead?' cried Nourjahad. 'He is, my lord,' answered Cadiga, 'and so is the worthy Zamgrad.'—'What

‘What is become of my son?’ said Nourjahad; ‘I hope he has not shared the same fate?’—‘It were better that he had,’ replied Cadiga, ‘for it is now some five and twenty years since he ran away from the governor in whose hands the wife Halem had placed him for his education; and, having in vain endeavoured to prevail on that honest man to bury you, that, giving out you were deceased, he might take possession of all your wealth; finding he could not succeed in his unnatural design, he took an opportunity of breaking open your cabinet, and securing all the treasure he could find, stole secretly away, and has never been heard of since.’

‘Ungrateful viper!’ exclaimed Nourjahad; ‘and thou cruel Genius, thus to imbitter a life, which was thy own voluntary gift; for thou camest to me unasked.’

‘Had not,’ proceeded Cadiga, ‘myself and the rest of your women consented to give up all our jewels to Halem, who turned them into money, we most long ere this have been reduced to want; for your unworthy son stripped you of all your wealth: but Halem conducted every thing with the same regularity and care as if you had been awake, discharging such of your domesticks as he thought unnecessary, and replacing such as died in your service; and it is not many days since the good old man was himself summoned away by the angel of death.’

‘Tell me,’ said Nourjahad, ‘does Schemzeddin still live?’

‘He does,’ replied Cadiga; ‘but, bending under the weight of age and infirmities, he is become so intolerably peevish, that no one dares speak to him. Indeed, he is at times so fantastical and perverse, that it is secretly whispered, he is not perfectly in his senses.’

‘It may very well be,’ said Nourjahad; ‘that he is doating by this time, for he cannot be much less than seventy years old. The Genius has in this article been faithful to his promise; for I, though nearly of the same age, find myself as vigorous and healthy as ever; but I give him little thanks for this, seeing he has defrauded me of such an unconscionable portion of my life.’

‘My lord,’ said Cadiga, ‘there is one circumstance which may in some measure reconcile you to what has already

happened. You know, by the severity of the sultan, you have been the greatest part of your days a prisoner; which condition, however it might have been alleviated by the pleasures which surrounded you, must nevertheless have by this time grown exceedingly irksome, had you all the while been sensible of your restraint; and you would now probably have been so palled with the repetition of the same enjoyments, that I know not whether your good Genius has not, instead of cruelty, shewn an extreme indulgence, in rendering you for such a number of years unconscious of your misfortune; especially as the sultan, by what I learnt from Halem, has, notwithstanding the length of time since he first deprived you of your liberty, never reversed the barbarous sentence.’

‘What thou hast said has some colour,’ replied Nourjahad, ‘and I am very much inclined to think thou hast hit upon the truth. Sage Cadiga, pursued he, ‘what thou hast lost in beauty, thou hast gained in wisdom; and, though I can no longer regard thee with tenderness, I will still retain thee in my service, and constitute thee governor over my female slaves; for I must have my seraglio supplied with a new race of beauties. For the rest of those hags, as I do not know of any thing they are now good for, I desire to see them no more.—Be gone,’ said he to them; ‘I shall give orders to Cadiga concerning you.’

When Nourjahad was left alone, he began seriously to reflect on his condition. ‘How unhappy I am,’ said he, ‘thus to find myself at once deprived of every thing that was dear to me; my two faithful friends, Halem and Zamgrad; all the blooming beauties of my seraglio, who used to delight my eyes; but, above all, my son, whose ingratitude and cruelty pierces me more deeply than all my other losses; and that rigid spirit who presides over my life, to take advantage of those hours of insensibility, to deprive me of all my comforts! Yet, why do I reproach my protector for that? the same ills might have befallen me, had the progress of my life been conducted by the common laws of nature. I must have seen the death of my friends, and they might possibly have been snatched from me in a manner equally sudden and surprising as their loss now appears.’

‘My

‘ My women, had I seen them every day, must necessarily by this time have grown old and disgusting to me; and I should certainly before now have discarded two or three generations of beauties. My son, too, would, in his heart, have been the same thankless and perfidious creature that he has now shewn himself, had the eye of watchful authority been constantly open on his conduct; and there is only this difference, perhaps, between me and every other parent, that I have lived to see my offspring trampling on filial duty, riotously seizing on my wealth, leaving my family to poverty, and not so much as bestowing a grateful thought on him who gave him being, and by whose spoils he is enriched: while other fathers, deceived by a specious outside, in the full persuasion of the piety, justice, and affection of their children, have descended to the grave in peace; while their heirs, with as little remorse as my graceless child, have laughed at their memories.

‘ I see it is in vain,’ proceeded he, ‘ to escape the miseries that are allotted to human life. Fool that I was to subject myself to them more by ten thousand fold than any other can possibly experience!—But stop, Nourjahad, how weak are thy complaints! thou knowest the conditions of thy existence, and that thou must of necessity behold the decay and dissolution of every thing that is mortal; take comfort then, and do not imbitter thy days by melancholy reflections, but resolve for the future to let no events disturb thy peace, seize every fleeting joy as it passes, and let variety be thy Heaven, for thou seest there is nothing permanent.’

As Nourjahad was never used, but on occasions of distress, to make use of his reason or philosophy, he no sooner found an alleviation of the evil, than he put them both to flight, as impertinent intruders. He did not therefore long disturb himself with disagreeable reflections, but resolved as soon as possible to return to those pleasures which he thought constituted the felicity of man’s life.

He gave himself but little concern about those treasures of which his son had robbed him; knowing he had an inexhaustible fund of wealth, of which, agreeably to the Genius’s promise, he could not be deprived.

From Cadiga he learnt that his house at Ormuz was in the same condition he had left it; Hasem having taken care to place a diligent and faithful servant there, on whom he might rely with equal sedrity as on himself: ‘ And he had the farther precaution,’ added Cadiga, ‘ not long before his death, to solicit, through Zamgrad’s means, the sultan’s permission for your return thither. “ This,” said he, “ may be necessary, in case our lord awakes before Schemzeddin’s decease, and should have a desire to quit this place, he may do it without the trouble of a fresh application.”

‘ And has the sultan granted this?’ cried Nourjahad.

‘ He has,’ answered Cadiga, ‘ as a matter of great indulgence: for having, as he said, heard that your profusion was unbounded, finding there were no hopes of reclaiming you, he had determined to confine you for the remainder of your life; with this liberty, however, that you might make choice either of this palace, or your house at Ormuz, for your prison.’

‘ Fool,’ cried Nourjahad; ‘ he little imagines how impotent are his threats, when he speaks of confining me for life! I would, however, he were dead, that I might be rid of this irksome restraint; but it cannot last much longer, for the days of Schemzeddin must needs draw towards a period. I will not, mean while, bestow any farther thought on him, but avail myself of that liberty which he has allowed me, and return to Ormuz; for I am weary of this solitude, seeing I have lost every thing that could render my retirement agreeable.

‘ Do thou,’ said he, ‘ see that every thing is prepared for my reception. I would have my seraglio filled once more, otherwise my house, when I enter it, will appear a desert to me, and I shall be at a loss how to divert the tedious hours which may yet remain of my confinement. I will depend on thy experience and skill in beauty, to make choice of such virgins as you think will well supply the place of those I have lost.’

‘ I have a friend,’ said Cadiga, ‘ a merchant, who deals in female slaves; and he has always such a number, that it will be easy to select from among them some whose charms cannot fail to please you. I will order him

‘him to repair to your house, and bring with him a collection of the rarest beauties he has in his possession; you may then chuse for yourself.’

‘Be it so,’ said Nourjahad; ‘I leave the conduct of every thing to thee: if I approve of the damsels, I shall not scruple at any price for their purchase.’

The day being come for his return to Ormuz, full of pleasing eagerness to behold the divine creatures which he was told waited his arrival, he set out with a splendid equipage; but had the mortification to behold his chariot surrounded by a party of the sultan’s guards, with drawn sabres in their hands, to repress the curiosity of those who might approach the chariot to gaze at the person who was conducted in so unusual a manner.

‘I could well excuse this part of my retinue,’ said Nourjahad, as he passed along; ‘but there is no resisting the commands of this whimsical old fellow Schemzeddin.’ Being thus conducted to his house, the guards as before posted themselves round it.

However chagrined Nourjahad was at this circumstance, he was resolved it should not interrupt his pleasures.

He found the young slaves whom Cadiga had prepared all waiting his arrival. They were richly clothed, and standing together in a row in a long gallery through which he was to pass. On his entering, the merchant to whom they belonged ordered the women to unveil.

Nourjahad examined them one after the other, but none of them pleased him. One had features too large, and another’s were too small; the complexion of this was not brilliant, and the air of that wanted softness; this damsel was too tall, and the next was ill proportioned.

‘Dost thou call these beauties?’ said Nourjahad, angrily. ‘By my life they are a pack of as awkward damsels as ever I beheld.’

‘Surely, my lord,’ cried the merchant, ‘you do not speak as you think. These young maids are allowed by all good judges to be the most perfect beauties that ever were seen in Persia: the sultan himself has none equal to them in his seraglio.’

‘I tell thee, man,’ said Nourjahad, ‘they are not worthy even to wait on those of whom I myself was formerly

master.’ — ‘I know not that, my lord,’ answered the merchant; ‘but this I am sure of, that I can have any sum which I shall demand for their purchase.’ — ‘Then thou must carry them to some other market,’ cried Nourjahad, ‘for to me they appear fit for nothing but slaves.’

Cadiga, who was present, now taking Nourjahad aside, said — ‘These, my lord, these damsels are less charming than those of which you were formerly possessed; but the taste for beauty is quite altered since that time: you may assure yourself that none will be offered to your acceptance that will exceed these. Were I and my companions, whom you once so much admired, to be restored to our youth again, we should not now be looked upon; such is the fantastick turn of the age.’

‘If this be so,’ said Nourjahad, ‘I shall be very unfashionable in my amours; for the present, however, I shall content myself with some of the most tolerable of these maidens, till I have time and opportunity of supplying myself with better.’

Saying this, he selected half a dozen of those young slaves whom he thought the most agreeable; and, having paid the merchant what he demanded for them, dismissed the rest.

Nourjahad having now once more established his household, and perceiving that these damsels, upon a longer acquaintance, were really amiable, expected to find himself restored to his former contentment and alacrity of spirits; but in this he was deceived: he was seized with a lassitude that rendered his days tiresome. The vacancy he found in his heart was insupportable: surrounded by new faces, he saw nobody for whom he could entertain either love or friendship. ‘This is a comfortless life,’ would he exclaim to himself; ‘yet how often, during the date of my existence, must this situation, melancholy as it is, recur to me! A friend shall no sooner be endeared to me by long experience of kindness and fidelity, without which it is impossible I should regard him, than death will deprive me of him, as it has already done of Hasem and Zamgrad: and how many bright eyes am I doomed to see for ever closed; or, what is as mortifying, to behold their faded lustre! There is but one way,’ said he, ‘to guard against those evils:

evils. I will no more contract friendships among men; nor ever again suffer my mind to be subdued by female charms: I will confound all distinction by variety, nor permit one woman to engross my heart; for I find by sad experience, even after such an amazing length of time, that the bare idea of my dear Mandana inspires me with more tenderness than ever I experienced from the fondest blandishments of all the beauties I have since possessed.

Nourjahad endeavoured to banish those melancholy thoughts by others more agreeable; but he had no resources within himself; he had nothing to reflect on from which he could derive any satisfaction. 'My life,' said he, 'appears like a dream of pleasure, that has passed away without leaving any substantial effects; and I am even already weary of it, though in fact, notwithstanding my advanced age, I have enjoyed it but a short time, dating from that period whence my immortality commenced.'

He tried to read, to divert his disordered thoughts; but from books he could receive no entertainment. If he turned over the pages of philosophers, moralists, or expounders of the mysteries of his religion, 'What have I to do with thy tedious lessons, or dry precepts?' said he: 'thou writest to men like thyself, subject to mortality; thou teachest them how to live, that they may learn how to die; but what is this to me? as I am not subject to the latter, thy advice can be of little use to me in regard to the former.'

He had next recourse to the poets; but their works gave him as little pleasure as the others. Absorbed as he had been in the grosser pleasures of sense, he had lost those fine feelings which constitute that delicate and pleasing perception we have of such images as are addressed to the heart. He knew the fallacy, and even essence, of all sensual enjoyments; and to the most warm descriptions of love, and the most pathetick pictures of grief, he was equally insensible.

'Poor wretches,' said he, on reading a fine elegy written by a lover on the death of his mistress; 'doomed as thou wast to a short span of life and a narrow circle of enjoyments, thou magnified every thing within thy confined sphere: one single object having en-

grossed thy whole heart, and inspired thee with transports, thou dost immortalize her charms! Her death, despairing to supply her place, filled thy eyes with tears, and taught thee to record thy own sorrows with her praises. I partake not of thy pleasures or thy pains; none but such as are liable to the same fate can be affected by thy sentiments.'

When he read of the death of heroes and kings, and the destruction of cities, or the revolution of empires, 'How circumscribed,' said he, 'is the knowledge of a paltry historian! who is at the pains of collecting the scanty materials which a life of forty or fifty years perhaps affords him; and then he makes a mighty parade of learning, with the poor pittance for which he has been drudging all his days. How infinitely superior will my fund of information be, who shall myself be an eye-witness to events as extraordinary as these, and numbered a thousand times over; for, doubtless, the same things which have happened will happen again. What curiosity can you incite in me, who shall infallibly see the same chain of causes and effects take place over and over again in the vast round of eternity?'

The accounts of travellers, descriptions of the manners and customs of various countries, and books of geography, afforded him a little more entertainment. 'All these places,' said he, 'I shall visit in my own proper person, and shall then be able to judge whether these accounts are just.'

While he endeavoured to fill up the vacuity he found in his mind, his time was spent at best but in a sort of insipid tranquillity. The voluptuary has no taste for mental pleasures.

He every now and then returned to his former excesses; but he had not the same relish for them as before: satiety succeeded every enjoyment. In vain did his slaves torture their invention to procure new delights for him: the powers of luxury were exhausted; and his appetites palled with abundance.

He grew peevish, morose, tyrannical; cruelty took possession of his breast; he abused his women and beat his slaves; and seemed to enjoy no satisfaction but that of tormenting others.

In vain did the prudent Cadiga, who had still some little influence over him,

expostulate with him on the enormity of his behaviour.

'How darest thou,' said he, 'presume to dictate to thy master, or to censure his conduct! To whom am I accountable for my actions?'—'To God and our prophet,' answered Cadiga, with a boldness that provoked Nourjahad's wrath. 'Thou dyest,' said he: 'as I am exempt from death, I never can be brought to judgment; what, then, have I to fear from the resentment, or hope from the favour, of the powers whom thou namest?'

'But hast thou no regard,' said Cadiga, 'for the laws of society, nor pity for the sufferings of thy fellow-creatures, whom thou makest to groan every day under thy cruelty?'

'Foolish woman,' said Nourjahad, 'dost thou talk to me of laws, who think myself bound by none? Civil and religious laws are so interwoven, that you cannot pluck out a single thread without spoiling the whole texture; and if I cut the woof, thinkest thou that I will spare the web, when I can do it with impunity? The privilege of immortality which I enjoy would be bestowed on me to little purpose, if I were to suffer the weak prejudices of religion, in which I am no way concerned, to check me in any of my pursuits. And what can the feeble laws of man do? My life they cannot reach.'

—'Yet thou art a prisoner notwithstanding,' answered Cadiga. 'True,' replied Nourjahad; 'but even in my confinements I am surfeited with delights. Schemzeddin's death must soon give me that liberty which, considering the race of uncontrolled freedom I have before me, I do not now think worth attempting: I shall then expatiate freely all over the globe. Meanwhile I tell thee, woman, I am weary of the dull round of reiterated enjoyments which are provided for me; my sensual appetites are cloyed; I have no taste for intellectual pleasures; and I must have recourse to those which gratify the malevolent passions.'

'Thou art not fit to live,' cried Cadiga, with a warmth of which she had cause to repent; for Nourjahad, enraged at her reply, plucked a poniard from his girdle—'Go tell thy prophet so,' said he, and plunged it into the side of the unfortunate slave, who fell at his feet weltering in blood.

The brutal Nourjahad, so far from being moved with this spectacle, turned from her with indifference; and, quitting the chamber, entered the apartments of his women, to whom with barbarous mirth he related what he had done.

Though he had now lost all relish for delicate pleasures, or even for the more gross enjoyments of sense, he nevertheless indulged himself in them to excess; and knowing he was not accountable to any one for the death of his slave, he thought no more of Cadiga; but, after a day spent in extravagant debauchery, sunk to repose.

But his eyes were opened to a different scene from that on which he had closed them. He no sooner awoke than he perceived a man sitting at his bed's foot, who seemed to be plunged in sorrow; he leaned pensively on his arm, holding a handkerchief before his eyes.

'What mockery is this?' said Nourjahad: 'didst thou suppose me dead; and art thou come to mourn over me?'

'Not so, my lord,' replied the man; 'I knew that you still lived: but the sultan is dead; the good Schemzeddin is no more!'—'I am glad of it,' replied Nourjahad; 'I shall now obtain my liberty. Who then is to reign in Ormuz?'—'Doubtless, my lord,' answered the man, 'the prince Schemerzad, the eldest son of Schemzeddin.'—'Thou ravest,' cried Nourjahad: 'Schemzeddin has no son.'—'Pardon me, my lord,' said the man; 'the sultana Nourmahal was delivered of this prince the very hour on which the unfortunate Cadiga died by your hand.'—'Thou art insolent,' replied Nourjahad, 'to mention that circumstance: but if so, we have indeed got a very young successor to the throne.'—'My lord,' answered the man, 'Schemerzad is allowed to be one of the most accomplished and wise young princes in all Persia.'—'That is marvellous,' cried Nourjahad, bursting into a fit of laughter: 'a sultan of four and twenty hours old must needs be wondrously wise and accomplished!'—'Nay, my lord,' replied the man, 'the prince is this day exactly twenty years of age.'

Nourjahad, on hearing this, looked in the face of the man, whom, from his dress, supposing he had been one of his slaves, he had not regarded before, but now perceived he was a stranger. 'Twenty years old!' cried he, starting up;

up; 'thou dost not tell me so!'—'Most certain,' said the man: 'Schemzeddin was so far advanced in years before the birth of the prince, that he despair'd of ever having a child; yet had the righteous monarch the satisfaction to see his beloved son arrive at manhood, and adorned with such virtues as made him worthy to fill his father's throne.'—'When did the old sultan die?' cried Nourjahad. 'His funeral obsequies were performed last night,' answered the man; 'and the people of Ormuz have not yet wiped the tears from their eyes.'—'It should seem, then,' said Nourjahad, 'that I have slept about twenty years! if so, prithee, who art thou? for I do not remember ever to have seen thy face before.'

'My name,' answered the stranger, 'is Cozro, and I am the brother of Cadiga, that faithful creature whom thy ungoverned fury deprived of life.'—'How darest thou mention her again?' cried Nourjahad; 'art thou not afraid to share the same fate thyself for thy presumption?'

'I do not value my life,' answered Cozro: 'having acquitted myself well of my duty here, I am sure of my reward in those blessed mansions where avarice, luxury, cruelty, and pride, can never enter. Strike then, Nourjahad, if thou darest; dismiss me to endless and uninterrupted joys; and live thyself a prey to remorse and disappointment, the slave of passions never to be gratified, and a sport to the vicissitudes of fortune.'

Nourjahad was confounded at the undaunted air with which Cozro pronounced these words; he trembled with indignation, but had not courage to strike the unarmed man who thus insulted him: wherefore dissembling his anger—'I see,' said he, 'that thou partakest of thy sister Cadiga's spirit: but, answer me, How earnest thou hither; and in what condition are the rest of my family?'—'I will tell thee,' answered Cozro. 'When Cadiga found herself dying, she sent for me: I was then a page to one of the emirs of Schemzeddin's court. She made me kneel by her bed-side, and take a solemn oath to perform with fidelity and secrecy what she should enjoin me. She then told me the secret of your life, and conjured me to watch and attend you carefully. "I have hi-

therto," said she, "had the conduct of his house; do you supply my place; and do not let Nourjahad, when he awakes from his trance, be sensible of the loss of the unfortunate Cadiga."

She then called in your principal slaves, and delivering to me in their presence the keys with which you had entrusted her, she told them they were henceforth to obey me, as they had done her. "Tell my lord," said she to me, "that I forgive him the death which his cruelty inflicted on a woman who loved him to the latest minute of her life." In pronouncing these words she expired.

'I knew not till then,' pursued Cozro, 'that thou hadst been the murderer of my sister; but she was no sooner dead, than the slaves informed me of the manner of her death. My resentment against thee was proportioned to the horror of thy guilt; and had I thrown myself at the feet of Schemzeddin, and implored justice on thy crimes, neither thy riches nor thy immortality would have availed thee; but thou wouldst have been condemned by a perpetual decree to have languished out thy wretched existence in a vile dungeon.'

'And what hindered thee,' cried Nourjahad, 'from pursuing thy revenge, seeing I was not in a condition to resist thee?'—'My reverence for the oath I had taken,' answered Cozro; 'and fear of offending the Almighty!'

Nourjahad, at this reply, was struck with a secret awe which he could not repel: he remained silent while Cozro proceeded—

'I obtained permission of the master whom I served to leave him, and entered immediately on my new employment; but I found I had undertaken a difficult task. Thou hadst rendered thyself so odious to thy women, that not one of them retained the smallest degree of love or fidelity towards thee. In spite of my vigilance, they made thy hated seraglio the scene of their unlawful pleasures; and, at length, having bribed the eunuchs who guarded them, they all in one night fled from thy detested walls, taking with them the slaves who had assisted them in their purpose.'—'Pernicious spirit,' exclaimed Nourjahad; 'are these the

'fruits I am to reap from thy fatal indulgence!'—'The rest of your servants,' pursued Cozro, 'I endeavoured to keep within the bounds of their duty.'—'And how didst thou succeed?' cried Nourjahad. 'But ill,' replied Cozro: 'they all declared, that nothing could have induced them to stay so long with a master of so capricious and tyrannical a humour, but the luxury and idleness in which thou permittedst them to live; and finding I managed your affairs with economy, they one after the other left your house; neither promises nor threats having power to prevent those who stayed longest in thy service from following the example of the first who deserted thee; so that I alone of all thy numerous household have remained faithful to thee; I who, of all others, had the most reason to abhor thee! But I have now acquitted myself of the trust which was reposed in me, and I leave thee as one condemned to wander in an unknown land, where he is to seek out for new associates, and to endeavour, by the power of gold, to bribe that regard from men which his own worth cannot procure for him.'

'Unfortunate wretch that I am!' cried Nourjahad, pierced to the quick with what he had just been told, 'what benefit have I hitherto received from my long life, but that of feeling, by miserable experience, the ingratitude and frailty of man's nature! How transitory have been all my pleasures! The recollection of them dies on my memory, like the departing colours of the rainbow, which fade under the eye of the beholder, and leave not a trace behind; while, on the other hand, every affliction with which I have been visited, has imprinted a deep and lasting wound on my heart, which not even the hand of time itself has been able to heal.'

'What have thy misfortunes been,' said Cozro, 'that are not common to all the race of man?'—'Oh, I have had innumerable griefs,' said Nourjahad. 'After a short enjoyment (during my fatal slumbers) the grave robbed me of Mandana, while she was yet in the bloom of youth and beauty. I lamented her death; tears and heaviness of heart were my portion for many days; yet, remembering that sorrow would not recall the dead, I suffered myself

to be comforted; and sought for consolation in the society of my other women, and the fond and innocent caresses of an infant son, whom Mandana left me. Joy and tranquillity revisited my dwelling, and new pleasures courted my acceptance; but they again eluded my grasp; and in one night (for so it appeared to me) my son, like an unnatural viper, forgetting all my tenderness, plundered and deserted me. The two faithful friends in whom I most confided, had closed their eyes for ever; and the beauties of my seraglio, whom I had last beheld fresh and charming as the lilies of the field, I now saw deformed with wrinkles, and bending under the infirmities of age.

'Yet these afflictions I surmounted, and resolved once more to be happy.'—'And wert thou so?' interrupted Cozro. 'No,' replied Nourjahad; 'the treacherous joys deceived me; yet I still looked forward with hope, but now awake to fresh disappointment: I find myself abandoned by those whose false professions of love had lulled me into security, and I rouse myself like a savage beast in the desert, whose paths are shunned by all the children of men.'

Nourjahad could not conclude this speech without a groan, that seemed to rend his heart.

'As thou art,' said Cozro, 'exempt from punishment hereafter, dost thou think also to escape the miseries of this life? Mistaken man! know, that the righteous Being, whose ordinances thou defiest, will even here take vengeance on thy crimes. And if thou wilt look back on thy past life, thou wilt find (for I have heard thy story) that every one of those several ills of which thou complainest, were sent as scourges to remind thee of thy duty, and inflicted immediately after the commission of some notorious breach of it.

'The death of Mandana was preceded by a brutal fit of drunkenness; by which, contrary to the laws of our prophet, thou sufferedst thyself to be overtaken. Then it was thy good Genius, to punish thee, plunged thee into that temporary death, from which thou didst awake to grief and disappointment: but thou madest no use of the admonition, but didst permit thyself

thyself to be again swallowed up by intemperance; and, not content to tread the ordinary paths of vice, thou turnedst out of the road, to the commission of a crime to which thou couldst have no temptation but the pride and licentiousness of thy heart. Thy profanation of our holy religion, in presuming to personate our great prophet, and make thy concubines represent the virgins of paradise, was immediately chastised, as it deserved, by a second time depriving thee of those faculties which thou didst prostitute to such vile purposes.

The ills with which thou foundest thyself surrounded, on awaking from thy trance, served to no other purpose than to stir up thy resentment against the Power who governed thy life: and, instead of reforming thy wickedness, thou soughtest out new ways of rendering thyself still more obnoxious to the wrath of Heaven. In the wantonness of thy cruelty, thou stainedst thy hands in blood; and that same night were thy eyelids sealed up by the avenging hand of thy watchful Genius; and thy depraved senses consigned for twenty years to oblivion! See, then, continued Cozro, 'if a life, which is to be a continued round of crimes and punishments in alternate succession, is a gift worthy to be desired by a wise man? For, assure thyself, O Nourjahad, that by the immutable laws of Heaven, one is to be a constant concomitant of the other; and that, either in this world or the next, vice will meet it's just reward.'

'Alas,' replied Nourjahad, 'thou hast awakened in me a remorse, of which I was never sensible before. I look back with shame on the detested use I have made of those extraordinary gifts vouchsafed me by my guardian spirit.'

'What shall I do, O Cozro, to expiate the offences I have committed? For though I have no dread of punishment hereafter, yet does that ætherial spark within inspire me with such horror for my former crimes, that all the vain delights which this world can afford me, will not restore my mind to peace, till, by a series of good actions, I have atoned for my past offences.'

'If thou art sincere in thy resolutions,' replied Cozro, 'the means, thou knowest, are amply in thy power.'

'Thy riches will enable thee to diffuse blessings among mankind; and thou wilt find more true luxury in that, than in all the gratifications where-with thou hast indulged thy appetites.'

'It shall be so,' replied Nourjahad; 'my treasures shall be open to thee, thou venerable old man; and do thou make it thy business to find out proper objects, whereon charity and benevolence may exert their utmost powers.'

'Enquire out every family in Ormuz whom calamity hath overtaken; and, provided they did not bring on their distresses by their own wilful misconduct, restore them to prosperity. Seek out the helpless and the innocent; and, by a timely supply of their wants, secure them against the attacks of poverty, or temptations of vice. Search for such as you think have talents which will render them useful to society, but who, for want of the goods of fortune, are condemned to obscurity; relieve their necessities, and enable them to answer the purposes for which nature designed them. Find out merit wherever it lies concealed; whether withheld from the light by diffidence, chained down and clogged by adversity, obscured by malice, or overborne by power; lift it up from the dust, and let it shine conspicuous to the world.'

'Glorious task!' cried Cozro; 'happy am I in being the chosen instrument of Nourjahad's bounty; and still more happy shall he be in seeing the accomplishment of his good designs.'

'We must not stop here,' said Nourjahad; 'I will have hospitals built for the reception of the aged and the sick; and my tables shall be spread for the refreshment of the weary traveller. No virtuous action shall pass by me unrewarded; and no breach of the laws of temperance, justice, or mercy, shall escape unproved. My own example, so far as it can influence, shall henceforth countenance the one, and discourage the other.'

'Blessed be the purpose of thy heart,' said Cozro, 'and prosperous be the days of thy life!'

Nourjahad now found the anxiety under which he had but a little before laboured, exceedingly relieved. 'My mind,' said he, 'is much more at ease than it was: let us not delay to put

‘ put our design in execution. I will lead you to the place where my treasure is concealed, which I never yet discovered to any one.’ Saying this, he took Cozro by the hand, and conducted him to the cave.

‘ Thou seest here,’ said he, ‘ riches which can never be exhausted; thou mayest perceive that I have not yet sunk a third part of one of these urns which contain my wealth; yet have I with monstrous profusion lavished away immense sums. Five more such urns as these are yet untouched. Those six, which thou seest on the right hand, contain wedges of the finest gold, which must be equal in value to the others. These six, which are ranged on the left, are filled with precious stones, whose worth must be inestimable: the wealth of Ormuz would not purchase a single handful. Judge, then, my friend, if I need be sparing in my liberality.’

Cozro expressed his astonishment at the sight of these wonders. ‘ If thou wouldst be advised by me,’ said he, ‘ thou wouldst secretly remove from Ormuz, and carry thy treasures with thee. Thou mayest deposit part of them in each of the different countries through which thou passest in thy progress all over the earth. By this means thou mayest have it in thy power to distribute with more ease thy bounty wherever thou goest; and be always provided with riches in what part soever of the world thou shalt chuse for a time to take up thy residence. Thy long abode in this city will draw observations on thee sooner or later; and thy person’s not having undergone any change from length of time, will bring on thee the suspicion of magick; for tradition will not fail to inform posterity of thy strange history.’

‘ You counsel well,’ replied Nourjahad: ‘ as I am now at liberty, I will retire from Ormuz. You, my dear Cozro, shall accompany me; your prudent counsel shall be my guide; and when I shall be deprived of you by death, I will still endeavour to follow your wise precepts.’

‘ Come,’ continued he, ‘ I am in haste to enter on my new course of life; let us both go into the city, and try to find out proper objects on which to exert our charity. I shall pass without observation, and unknown, as

few of my contemporaries can now be living; and I will not leave the country which gave me birth, without first making it feel the effects of that beneficence which thou hast awakened in my heart.’

‘ Deserving of praise as thou art,’ said Cozro, ‘ thou, for the present, must suppress thy ardour to do good; for though, by the death of Schemzeddin, thou art no longer a prisoner, thou art not nevertheless yet at liberty to leave thy house.’ — ‘ Why not?’ answered Nourjahad: ‘ Who is there now to prevent me?’

‘ The young sultan,’ replied Cozro, ‘ deeply afflicted for the death of his father, and, out of a pious regard for his memory, has given strict commandment that all his subjects should observe a solemn mourning for him during the space of twenty days; in which time all the shops and places of public resort (except the mosques) are to be shut up, and no business of any kind transacted; nor are any persons to be seen in the streets, excepting those who visit the sick, and the slaves who must necessarily be employed to carry provisions, on pain of the sultan’s heavy displeasure.’

‘ This edict was published yesterday, and the people of Ormuz all love the memory of Schemzeddin, and the person of their present sultan, too well, not to pay an exact obedience to it.’

‘ If so,’ said Nourjahad, ‘ I will not by my example encourage others to infringe their duty; yet, as the relieving of the poor is in itself meritorious, I would not wish to be withheld from doing it so long as twenty days. How many virtuous people may be, during that time, pining for want! more especially as this prohibition must cut off all intercourse between man and man, and deprive many poor wretches of the charitable succour they might otherwise receive. I think therefore that thou, Cozro, in thy slave’s habit, mayest go forth unsuspected; and by privately seeking out, and alleviating the miseries of our fellow citizens, do an act of more real benefit than can result from the strictest conformity to this pageant of sorrow, which many in their hearts, I am sure, must condemn.’

Cozro approving of these sentiments, readily agreed to the expedient; and, taking

taking a large purse of gold with him to distribute as occasion might serve, immediately set out, in order to execute his lord's commands.

Nourjahad now entered on a total reformation in his way of living. He rose at day-break, and spent the morning in study or meditation. Luxury and intemperance were banished from his board; his table was spread with the plainest dishes, and he wholly abstained from excess in wine. His slumbers were sweet, and he found his health more vigorous.

'I will no more,' said he, 'enslave myself to the power of beauty. I have lived to see the decay of a whole seraglio of the fairest faces in Persia, and have sighed for the ingratitude of the next generation that succeeded them. I will not then seek out for those destroyers of my quiet, for whose death or infidelity I must for ever complain. Mandana was the only woman who ever really deserved my love; could I recal her from the grave, and endue her with the same privilege of which I am myself possessed, I would confine myself to her arms alone; but, since that is impossible, I will devote myself to the charms of virtue, which of all things she most resembled.'

While Nourjahad was thus resolving to correct the errors of his past life, his virtue was not merely in speculation. He never laid him down to rest without the satisfaction of having made some one the better for him. Cozro, who constantly spent the day in enquiring out and relieving the distressed, failed not to return every night to give an account of his charitable mission, and to infuse into his master's bosom the (till now unfelt) joy which springs from righteous deeds.

The heart of Nourjahad was expanded, and glowed with compassion for those sufferings which Cozro feelingly described as the lot of so many of his fellow-creatures. As charity and benevolence rose in his breast, he found his pride subside. He was conscious of his own unworthiness. He kneeled, he prayed, he humbled himself before the Almighty, and returned thanks to God for enabling him to succour the unfortunate.

In this happy frame of mind he continued for eighteen days; there wanted but two more to the expiration of the

mourning for the sultan, when Nourjahad was to be at full liberty to pursue in his own person the dictates of his reformed, and now truly generous and benevolent heart.

He was sitting alone in his apartment, waiting the arrival of Cozro, in the pleasing expectation of receiving some fresh opportunity of doing good. The hour of his usual return was already past, and Nourjahad began to fear some accident had happened to him; but he little knew that a black cloud hung over him, which was ready to pour down all its malignity on his own head.

As he mused on what might be the occasion of Cozro's long stay, he heard a loud knocking at his door. It was immediately opened by one of his slaves; and a man, who by his habit he knew to be one of the eady's officers, rudely entered his chamber.

'How comes it,' said the stranger, 'that thou hast had the temerity, in contempt of our sovereign lord's commands, to employ thy emissary about the city at a time when thou knowest that so strict an injunction has been laid on all people to keep within their houses, none being permitted to stir abroad but for the absolute necessities of life, or in cases of imminent danger?'

'Far be it from me,' replied Nourjahad, 'to disobey our mighty sultan's orders; but I understood that slaves had permission to go unquestioned on their master's business.'—'And what business,' answered the man, 'can thy slave have from morning to night in so many different quarters of the city?'

Nourjahad, who did not care to be himself the trumpeter of his own good deeds, hesitated to give an answer.

'Ha, ha,' cried the stranger, 'I see plainly there is something dangerous in thy mystery, and that the money which thy slave has been distributing among such a variety of people, is for a purpose very different from that which he pretends. A likely matter it is, indeed, that a private man should bestow in charity such sums as Cozro acknowledges he has within these few days distributed!'

'Yet nothing is more certain,' replied Nourjahad, 'than that Cozro has spoke the truth.'—'We shall see that,' replied the officer, in a tone of insolence; 'Cozro is already in prison, and my orders are to conduct thee to him.'

Nour-

Nourjahad, exceedingly troubled at hearing this, replied, he was ready to go with him; and the officer led him out of his house.

It was now late at night; they passed along the streets without meeting any one, and soon reached the place wherein Cozro was confined. It was the prison wherein such persons were shut up as were accused of treason against the state.

Here he found the unfortunate Cozro in a dungeon. 'Alas!' cried he, as soon as his master entered, 'why do I see thee here?'—'Say rather, my dear Cozro,' replied Nourjahad, 'what strange fatality has brought thee to this dismal place?'

'I can give no other account,' answered Cozro, 'but that, in returning home this night, I was seized on in the street by some of those soldiers who were employed to patrol about the city, to see that the sultan's orders were punctually observed; and, being questioned concerning my business, I told them, that I had been relieving the wants of indigent people, and saving, even from perishing, some poor wretches who had not wherewithal to buy food.'

"That is an idle errand," replied one of them, "and might have been deferred till the term of mourning was expired: however, if you will give me a piece of gold, I will let you pass for this time; otherwise, both you and your employer may happen to repent of having transgressed the sultan's commands." I made no scruple, pursued Cozro, 'to take out my purse, in which there were ten sequins left. I gave one of them to the soldier, but the rapacious wretches seeing I had more money, were not content with this, but insisted on my giving the whole among them. I refused; some angry words ensued; one of the miscreants struck me, and I returned the blow. Enraged at this, they hurried me before the cady, to whom they accused me of having disobeyed the edict, and assaulted the sultan's officers in the discharge of their duty. I was not heard in my defence, having four witnesses against me, but was immediately dragged to this horrid prison; and the sultan himself, they say, is to take cognizance of my offence.'

'Oh, Heaven!' cried Nourjahad, 'to what mischiefs does not the love of

gold expose us! See, my friend, into what misfortunes thou art plunged by the sordid avarice of those vile soldiers! But why, why didst thou hesitate to give up that paltry sum which thou hadst in thy purse, to obtain thy liberty?'—'I do not repent what I have done,' answered Cozro; 'and shall contentedly suffer the penalty I have incurred, since it was in so good a cause.'

'If the sultan is just,' replied Nourjahad, 'the punishment ought only to fall on me, who alone am guilty, since what thou didst was by my command.'

Here the officer who had conducted Nourjahad to prison, and who was present at this discourse, interposed, and addressing himself to Nourjahad—'Thou hast not as yet been accused to the sultan,' said he; 'and it is not too late to extricate even thy slave from this troublesome affair; it is but making a handsome present to the cady, and I will undertake this matter will go no farther.'—'I am willing to do so,' replied Nourjahad, eagerly; 'name your demand, and you shall have it. Provided I am allowed to go home to my own house, I will fetch the money; and, if you are afraid of my escaping, you yourself may bear me company.'

'I will not consent to it,' replied Cozro; 'neither liberty nor life are worth purchasing on base conditions. I will submit my cause to Schemerzad's justice, the cause of uprightness and truth; my own innocence shall be my support; and I will dare the worst that fraud and malice can suggest against me.'

In vain did Nourjahad urge him to accept the proffered terms; he remained inflexible to all the arguments he could use to persuade him; wherefore, finding him determined, he was obliged to desist; and Cozro, after passing the remainder of the night in quiet and profound sleep, though without any other bed than the bare earth, was at dawn of day called forth to appear before the sultan.

The reflections Nourjahad made on the resolute behaviour of Cozro, served not a little to fortify his mind. 'How noble must this man's soul be,' said he, 'which sets him thus above the reach of adversity? and with what contempt he looks down on the glo-

rious

rious prospects he has before him, when put in the balance with his integrity! Surely, it is not in this life he places his happiness, since he is so ready to forego the pleasures he might enjoy with me, in that participation of wealth and liberty which I have promised him. How superior is my servant to me, who, but for his example, should now sink under my fears; but he has resources which I have not. Alas! why did I barter my hopes of paradise for the vain, the transitory, the fallacious joys which this vile world bestows! Already I have tried them; what do they inspire but satiety and disgust? I never experienced true contentment, but during the time, short as it is, since I abjured those follies in which I once delighted; and I am now persuaded that, after having passed a few, a very few years more, in the enjoyment of such gratifications as I have not yet had an opportunity of tasting, that I shall grow even weary of the light, and wish to be dismissed to that place where we are told no sorrows can approach.

Nourjahad was buried in these reflections, when he was roused by the return of Cozro. The glimmering light which a lamp afforded, struck full on the face of his friend, (for he no longer considered him as a servant) and he rejoiced to see Cozro's cheerful countenance, by which he judged that he had nothing to fear.

'I am come,' said Cozro, approaching Nourjahad, and kissing his hand, 'to bid thee adieu, for from this day we are to be for ever divided! It is that thought only which makes our separation grievous. Had I hopes of ever beholding thy face in the mansions of light, I should go to death with the same alacrity with which I close my eyes in slumber.'

'Good Heaven!' cried Nourjahad, 'dost thou talk of death? Can it be, is it possible that thy life is in danger?'

'What is the life, about which thou art anxious?' replied Cozro; 'our being here is but a shadow; that only is real existence which the blessed enjoy after their short travel here. And know, O Nourjahad, I would not yield up my expectations of the happy place in paradise for the sovereign rule of the whole earth, though my

days were to be extended to the date of thy life, and every wish of my soul gratified to the utmost. Think, then, with how little reluctance I shall leave a world, wherein I am sure of meeting nothing but oppression, treachery, and disappointment; where mercy is construed into treason, and charity is called sedition!'

'And art thou then doomed to die?' said Nourjahad, pale and trembling at the thought, though convinced it was a predicament in which he could never stand.

'I am,' answered Cozro; 'my offence was found capital. Disobedience to the sultan's edict alone, incurred a heavy punishment; but my crime was, by the malice of my accusers, so highly aggravated, that the penalty became death. They charged me with having distributed money for evil purposes, among persons disaffected to the state, and with having beat and abused those officers who first detected me. In vain did I offer all the pleas that truth could suggest; my enemies, exasperated at losing the sum which they hoped to have extorted from you, swore to the facts of which I was accused, and the rigid sultan condemned me to death. What thy fate is to be, I know not; but since it is thy misfortune to be doomed to perpetual life, better purchase thy freedom on any terms, than be condemned to languish for years in a prison, for such probably will be thy lot.'

'O that I could die with thee!' said Nourjahad, 'miserable that I am, thus to be deprived of thy counsel and friendship, at a time when I so much stood in need of them. But wherefore, my friend, why should we submit to the tyranny of the sultan? though thou art condemned, there may yet be found means to deliver thee. The keeper of the prison will gladly set a price on thy liberty; a hundred thousand pieces of gold shall be thy ransom; and I shall think myself rich by the purchase!'

'And what is to become of thee?' replied Cozro. 'I will buy my own freedom at the same rate,' answered Nourjahad; 'and we will both fly from Qormuz together.'—'And leave your treasures behind you?' cried Cozro; 'for it will be impossible to convey from hence such a vast mass of riches without discovery.'

'I value

'I value them no longer,' said Nourjahad; 'they can never yield me any permanent enjoyment. The saving of thy life is the only good turn I now expect from them. That once accomplished, I shall desire to retain no more of them than what will support me above want, and I will leave the rest to be for ever hid in the bosom of the earth, where they now lie, that they may never more become a snare to others as they have been to me.'

'Praised be our holy prophet,' said Cozro, 'that has at length endued the heart of Nourjahad with wisdom. Pursue the purposes of thy soul; effect thy own freedom as soon as possible, since no comfort can visit thee in the gloom of this frightful prison; but tempt not Cozro back to a life which he despises. I tell thee again, there is nothing in this world to be put in competition with the glories I have in prospect in that state to which I am now hastening. Why, then, Nourjahad, wouldst thou retard my felicity, or wish me to hazard, for the sake of delusive pleasures, those transcendent joys which await the virtuous?'

The energy with which Cozro delivered himself, pierced Nourjahad to the inmost soul. A holy ardour was kindled in his breast, which he had never felt before; he found his faculties enlarged, his mind was transported above this world; he felt as it were unimbedded, and an involuntary adjuration burst from his lips. 'Oh! holy prophet,' said he, 'take, take back the gift, that I in the ignorance and presumption of my heart so vainly sought, and which too late I find a punishment instead of a blessing! I contemn riches, and for ever cast them from me; suffer me then to yield up my life; for there can be no true happiness but in beholding thee, O Mahomet, face to face, in the never-fading fields of paradise!'

Saying this, he prostrated himself on the ground, and continued for some time in mental prayer.

Cozro observed an awful silence while he continued in this posture. When Nourjahad arose from the earth—'May our great prophet,' said Cozro, 'hear your prayers; and, were he even now to grant them, all the favours he has already bestowed on you would be poor and contemptible to this last best boon.' Farewel, said he, 'I must

now leave thee; I was only permitted to come and bid thee adieu. May the Supreme grant thy petition, then shall we again meet in the mansions of happy spirits.' Nourjahad embraced him, and Cozro withdrew.

Being now left at liberty to his own thoughts, he made bitter reflections on the strangeness of his fate. 'Fool, fool that I was,' cried he aloud, beating his breast, 'to prefer so rash, so impious a petition to the prophet, as to desire the everlasting laws of nature to be overturned, to gratify my mad luxurious wishes. I thought the life of man too short for the enjoyment of those various and unbounded pleasures which wealth could procure; but it is long, since I have found my error. Well did my guardian Spirit say, I should repent of the gift I had implored when it should be too late. I do indeed repent; but, O thou benign intelligence, if thou hast remaining any favour for thy inconsiderate unhappy charge, descend once more to my relief, and, if possible, restore me to that state for which I was designed by my Creator; a poor mortal, liable to, and now longing for the friendly stroke of death.'

He had scarce pronounced these words, when his prison doors flew open; a resplendent light flashed in, which illuminated the whole dungeon, and he beheld his guardian Genius standing before him, exactly as he had appeared to him before. 'Thy prayers are heard,' said he, 'O son of frailty! and thy penitence is accepted in the sight of the Most High. I am sent down again by our prophet to re-assume that gift which thou art now satisfied must make thee miserable. Yet examine thy heart once more before I pronounce thy irrevocable doom; say, art thou willing to become subject to the common lot of mortals?'

'Most willing,' replied Nourjahad; 'yet I wonder not, my seraphic Guide, that thou shouldst doubt the stability of my mind; but in this last purpose of it, I am sure I shall remain unshaken.'

'If so,' replied the shining vision, 'thy guardian Angel consigns thee to the arms of death, with much more joy than he conferred on thee riches and immortality. Thou hast nothing more to do, than to prostrate thyself with thy face to the earth. Remain this evening in fervent

‘ fervent prayer, and await what shall befall thee to-morrow.’

Nourjahad made no reply, but falling with his face to the ground, he soon found the dungeon restored to its former gloom, the light and the guardian Spirit vanishing together in an instant.

He continued in devout prayer till night; when the keeper of the prison entered his dungeon to bring him some refreshment.

‘ The sultan,’ said he, ‘ purposes to examine you to-morrow, and much I fear you will have as rigorous a sentence passed on you as that which has been already executed on Cozro.’— ‘ Is he then dead?’ cried Nourjahad, mournfully. ‘ He is,’ replied the keeper; ‘ it is but an hour since I saw him deprived of breath; but he received the blow with such an heroick firmness, that thou wouldst have thought he rather enjoyed a triumph than suffered an ignominious death.’

‘ Happy, happy Cozro!’ cried Nourjahad; ‘ thou art now beyond the reach of misfortune; while I, perhaps, may be doomed to sustain for years a wretched life.’

‘ Thy life,’ said the keeper, ‘ may be nearer a period than thou art aware of. The sultan is covetous, and surrounded by needy favourites, whom the report of your immense wealth has made eager for your destruction; for you cannot be ignorant, that should you die, involved as it is said you are in Cozro’s guilt, your treasures would be confiscated to the sultan. From this circumstance I have heard it whispered, your head is already devoted; and this, perhaps, was the true cause of Cozro’s death, and will give the better colour to yours. It is not, however,’ added he, ‘ even yet too late to prevent the danger; had not your slave been obstinate, he might now have been alive, and out of the reach of harm. You have the same means of preservation, in regard to your own person, still in your power; and, if you will make it worth my while to run the risk, I will this night set you at liberty.’

‘ And dost thou think,’ said Nourjahad, ‘ that I have profited so little by the example of my noble friend, as to accept of thy offer, sordid and treacherous as thou art? If thou art base enough to

betray thy trust for gold, know that the mind of Nourjahad is above receiving a favour from such a wretch. As for my wealth, let the sultan take it; my only wish is to part with that and my life also.’

‘ That wish may speedily be accomplished,’ said the keeper, in an angry tone; ‘ and to-morrow, perhaps, you may repent of your folly, when you find yourself condemned to follow your noble friend to the other world.’ Nourjahad made no reply, and the keeper suddenly departed.

Nourjahad spent the night in prayers and meditation; he found peace and tranquillity restored to his breast; and, perfectly resigned to the will of the prophet, he waited the event of the next day with the utmost composure.

In the morning the keeper of the prison entered to him. ‘ Follow me,’ said he; ‘ thou art going to appear before the sultan, who himself is to be thy judge; a rigorous one thou wilt find him; but thy folly be on thy own head, who didst proudly refuse the proffer I made thee of liberty and life.’

‘ Lead on,’ said Nourjahad; ‘ it is not for such men as thou art to censure a conduct of which thou dost not know the motive.’

He was now carried out of the dungeon, and ordered to ascend a chariot, in which the captain of the sultan’s guards was already placed, to receive his prisoner. The chariot was surrounded by soldiers; and in this manner he was conducted to the presence of the sultan.

Schemerzad was seated on a throne, in the hall of his palace, wherein he was used to distribute justice. The emirs, and great officers of his court, were standing round him.

Nourjahad stood before him with his eyes bent to the ground; and, however awed he might be at the presence of his royal master, and the august assembly which surrounded him, yet the dignity of conscious innocence, and the perfect reliance he had on the Supreme Judge of his judge, rendered him superior to every thing. His deportment was modest and respectful, yet did he discover no symptom of fear.

The sultan made a sign for every one present to withdraw, but one person who stood on the lower step of his throne, and whom Nourjahad judged to be his prime vizier.

'What hast thou to say, presumptuous man,' said Schemerzad, in a stern voice; 'what excuse canst thou offer for daring, in contempt of my edict, to employ thy agent, during the time set apart for mourning, in going about the city from day to day; ostentatiously displaying thy ill-timed liberality amongst my subjects; endeavouring, as I am informed, to conciliate their affections, for purposes dangerous to me, and the safety of my crown? What hast thou to offer in answer to this charge?'

Nourjahad prostrated himself to the ground. 'Mighty sultan,' said he, 'I have nothing to offer in extenuation of my fault, with regard to the first part of the charge. I acknowledge that I distributed money among your majesty's subjects, and that at a time too when every act but those of absolute necessity was interdicted. I offer not to palliate this breach of my duty.'

'Audacious wretch,' interrupted the sultan, 'to what end was thy profusion employed?'

'To obtain a blessing from Heaven,' answered Nourjahad; 'and, by relieving the wants and afflictions of others, to make some atonement for my own riotous and intemperate abuse of that wealth which ought to have been employed to better purposes.'

'Wouldst thou persuade me, then,' cried Schemerzad, 'that charity was thy motive!'—'It was, illustrious sultan,' replied Nourjahad: 'I have spoke the truth; and, to convince your majesty that I have no sinister designs against the ever-sacred person of my sovereign, I will now voluntarily yield up that treasure to thee, which, had I been vile enough to have so employed, would have bought the fidelity of more than half thy subjects, though every man of them had stood near the heart and throne of Schemerzad.'

The undaunted manner in which Nourjahad spoke these words, made Schemerzad shake on his imperial seat; but quickly re-assuming the majesty of his station—'Do, then, as thou hast spoken,' said he, 'and I will believe thee.'

'If your majesty will permit me,' said Nourjahad, 'to go to my house, and will send a proper person with me, I will deliver up into his hands all

my wealth, requesting no more than will supply my wants so long as Heaven permits me to live.'

'I will not trust thee out of my sight,' said Schemerzad; 'thou mayest as well instruct some one in my presence where to find the riches of which I hear thou art possessed, and I will send for them.'

Nourjahad then informed the sultan of the subterraneous cave in his garden; and delivering him the key, told him he would there find all the wealth of which he was master.

Schemerzad immediately dispatched his visier, ordering him to have the riches he should find immediately conveyed to his treasury. He then commanded Nourjahad to retire into a saloon, that was separated from the hall only by a curtain, and there wait the return of the visier; before whom the sultan said he had some farther questions to put to him.

As the gardens of Nourjahad joined to those belonging to the royal palace, the visier was not long in going and returning. Nourjahad heard him talk to Schemerzad, and straight he was called on to come forth, and stand before the sultan: but Schemerzad now accosted him in a voice like thunder. 'Perfidious and insolent slave,' said he, 'art thou not afraid of instant death falling on thee, for daring thus to falsify before thy sovereign lord and master? Say, before thou art cut off by torture from the face of the earth, where thou hast concealed thy wealth; for well thou knowest, there is nothing contained in that cave which thou pretendest with so much care to lock up.'

'Nothing!' replied Nourjahad, in amazement. 'By the head of our prophet, when I last was there, it contained more than would purchase thy whole empire a thousand times over. It was but the very day on which I was dragged to prison, that I saw it; the key has never since been out of my pocket; who then could possibly have conveyed away my treasure?'

As Nourjahad applied himself to the visier while he spoke, that minister, thinking himself reflected on by his words, replied scornfully—'Thou thinkest perhaps it is I who have robbed thee, and that I have framed this story to deceive the sultan, and ruin thee.'—'I do not say so,' answered Nourjahad;

Nourjahad; 'but this I am sure of, that no human being but thyself knew where to find my treasure.'—'Some demon, perhaps,' replied the visier, with an air of contempt, 'has removed it thence.'

Nourjahad now recollecting suddenly, that his guardian Spirit had probably reclaimed this, as well as the other gift, replied coolly—'It is not at all unlikely; a certain Genius, who watches over my motions, has undoubtedly carried away my wealth.'

'Do not think,' said the sultan, 'that affecting to be out of thy senses shall preserve thee from my wrath.'

'Your majesty,' said the visier, 'had best order that his head be instantly struck off, for daring to impose on your credulity, and abuse your clemency in suffering him to out-live that slave who obstinately persisted in refusing to discover his master's riches.'

'Did Cozro do so?' cried Nourjahad. 'He did,' answered the visier; 'but we will see whether thou wilt persevere in the denial, and to the latest minute of thy life preserve the firmness of thy slave.'

'And who is it that thou callest a slave, thou minister of cruelty?' said Nourjahad boldly. 'The soul of Cozro raised him infinitely more above thee, than the rank of the sultan of Persia lifts him above the meanest of his subjects.—My lord,' pursued he, throwing himself at Schemerzad's feet, 'I have no other plea to offer for my life; I call Heaven to witness I have spoken nothing but the truth; the severest tortures you can inflict on me will extort no more. I was willing to make a voluntary sacrifice of my riches: I am now as ready to yield my life.'

'Art thou not then afraid to die?' said Schemerzad.

'No, mighty sultan,' answered Nourjahad; 'I look upon death, to a virtuous man, as the greatest good the Almighty can bestow!'

The sultan, instead of making any reply, clapped his hands; and Nourjahad supposing it was a signal to have him seized and carried to execution, rose up, and stood with an intrepidity in his looks that shewed how little he was affected with the near prospect of death.

But instead of the slaves whom he ex-

pected to see coming to lay hold on him, he beheld, standing close to the throne of Schemerzad, his guardian Genius, just in the same celestial form in which he had twice before appeared to him!

Awed and amazed, Nourjahad started back, and gazed at the heavenly vision. Not daring to trust his senses, he remained mute and motionless for some minutes; but he was roused from his deep attention by a loud burst of laughter, which broke at once from the sultan, the visier, and the guardian Genius.

This new and extraordinary incident threw Nourjahad into fresh astonishment; when, without giving him time to recover himself, the angelic youth, snatching from his head a circlet of flowers intermixed with precious stones, which encompassed his brows, and shaded a great part of his forehead; and at the same time throwing off a head of artificial hair which flowed in golden ringlets down his shoulders; a fine fall of brown hair, which was concealed under it, succeeded, dropping in light curls on his neck and blushing cheeks; and Nourjahad, in the person of his seraphic Guide, discovered his beloved and beautiful Mandana!

Whatever transports the sight of her would at another time have inspired in the breast of Nourjahad, his faculties were now too much absorbed in wonder to leave room for any other passion. Wherefore, not daring to approach her, the sultan, willing to put an end to his suspense, cried out—'Look up, Nourjahad, raise thy eyes to thy master's face, no longer the angry Schemerzad, thy offended prince, but the real Schemzeddin, thy friend and kind protector.'

Nourjahad, who before, out of respect and awful distance, had not ventured to look in the sultan's face, now fixed his eyes earnestly upon him. 'By the life of Schemerzad,' said he, 'if I were not certain that all this is illusion, and that thy illustrious father, my royal and once beloved master, is dead, thou art so very like him, that I should swear that thou wert the real sultan Schemzeddin himself; such, at thy years, was his countenance and features.'

The sultan at this burst into a second fit of laughter. 'And for whom,' said the visier, who had by this time taken

off his turban, and a false beard which he wore, 'for whom wouldst thou take me?'

'By Mahomet,' cried Nourjahad, falling back a step or two, 'I should take thee for my old friend Hafem, if I were not convinced that the good man died above twenty years ago.'

'It is time,' said the sultan, descending from his throne, and taking Nourjahad by the hand, 'it is now time to undeceive thee, and explain to thee the mystery of all those extraordinary events which seem to have bewildered thy senses.'

'Know, then, Nourjahad, that the adventure of thy guardian Genius was all a deception, and a piece of machinery of my contrivance. You are now convinced, by the evidence of your own eyes, that your celestial intelligence was no other than this young damsel.'

'I had a mind to make trial of thy heart; and, for this purpose, made choice of this charming virgin, for whom I own I had entertained a passion, but found I could not gain her affections. She had seen you, from the windows of the womens apartments, walking with me in the gardens of the seraglio, and had conceived a tenderness for you, which she frankly confessed to me, declaring at the same time, she would never give her love to any other. Though she was my slave, I would not put a constraint upon her inclinations; but told her, if she would assist me faithfully in a design I had formed, I would reward her by bestowing her on you.'

'She readily assented to my proposal; and, having previously prepared every thing for my purpose, I equipped her as you see.'

'It was not difficult for me to introduce her into your chamber, by a private door, which you know communicates between your apartments and certain lodgings in my palace.'

'I myself stood at the door, while she entered as you slept, and contrived to throw that light into your chamber which disclosed to you the wonderful vision. I overheard all your discourse, and could scarce contain my laughter, when you so greedily received that marvellous essence from Mandana, which you supposed would confer immortality; but which was in reality

nothing more than a soporifick drug, of so potent a nature, that the fumes of it alone were capable of throwing the person who smelt to them into a profound sleep. It had quickly this effect on you; and I took that opportunity of conveying into your chamber those coffers which you thought contained such immense treasures, but which in truth were as great counterfeits as your guardian Angel. The supposed precious stones were nothing more than false gems, which I procured from a skillful lapidary, who had given them such an extraordinary polish and lustre, that they might well pass for jewels of inestimable value, on one better skilled in those matters than you were.'

'The ingots of gold were all base metal, which I got from the same artist. Nothing, in short, was real, but the money, part of which I was very willing to sacrifice to my experiment; though, as I have managed it, the largest sums, which thou in thy extravagance hast expended, were returned into my coffers.'

'As I naturally supposed, that so long as the money lasted you would not have recourse to the other treasures, I was not afraid of having the fraud detected. The cave, which was an accidental circumstance, but of which I had long known, was by my contrivance made the repository of thy riches.'

'When thou wert settled in the full possession of thy imaginary felicity, thou mayest remember that Hafem was first recommended to thy service; Mandana too was, among other slaves, presented to thy view. No wonder that her charms captivated thy heart. Her love to thee was as pure as it was fervent: but thy boundless wishes were not to be restrained; and, forgetting all the rational principles that thou didst at first lay down to regulate thy conduct, thou gavest thyself up to all manner of vile excesses, and didst shew the depravity of the human heart when unrestrained by divine laws.'

'It was now time, I thought, to punish thee, and to shew thee the vanity of all earthly enjoyments. By opiates infused into thy wine that night on which thou didst debase thyself by drunkenness, I threw thee into a sound sleep; and though it lasted not much longer than the usual term of ordinary repose,

‘ repose, it yet gave me an opportunity
‘ of making such farther dispositions as
‘ I thought necessary for the carrying on
‘ of my design.

‘ I laid hold of this juncture to with-
‘ draw Mandana from thy arms, pro-
‘ mising, however, to restore her to thee
‘ if I found thee ever worthy of her.

‘ I believe it is needless to inform you,
‘ that the confinement I laid you under
‘ was for no other end than to cut off
‘ all intercourse between you and any
‘ others than those of your own household;
‘ every one of whom were of my placing
‘ about you, even to the ladies of your
‘ seraglio, who were no others than the
‘ prettiest slaves I could find among
‘ those who attended on my own wo-
‘ men.

‘ Every one entrusted with my secret
‘ was tied down by the most solemn
‘ oaths to keep it inviolably; and this,
‘ with a promise of reward, served, as
‘ the event has shewn, to secure their
‘ fidelity.

‘ There was not an action of thy life
‘ but I was made acquainted with; and
‘ while thou didst triumph in the joys
‘ of my successful illusion, I sometimes
‘ pitied thy weakness, and sometimes
‘ laughed at thy extravagance.

‘ That magnificent palace of which
‘ thou thoughtest thyself master, was one
‘ which I had borrowed for the purpose
‘ from an emir who was in my secret,
‘ and who was himself often present in
‘ disguise among your slaves, a witness
‘ to your extravagancies. I will not
‘ encrease thy confusion by reminding
‘ thee of the inordinate excesses thou
‘ wert guilty of in thy retirement. Thou
‘ canst not have forgot the project of
‘ creating for thyself an earthly paradise.
‘ This was the second crisis I laid hold
‘ on to punish thee; and, by tearing thee
‘ from thy impious pleasures, to remind
‘ thee that crimes cannot be committed
‘ with impunity. A second sleep, pro-
‘ cured as the former was, but of some-
‘ what a longer duration, gave me full
‘ opportunity to make a total change in
‘ the face of thy affairs. Hasem (whom
‘ thou didst suppose to be dead) re-
‘ mained still secretly concealed in thy
‘ house, to be as it were the grand spring
‘ to move all the rest of thy domesticks.

‘ The hags whom thou hadst imposed
‘ upon thee for the decayed beauties of
‘ thy seraglio, were really a set of not-
‘ able old dames, whom he had tutored

‘ for the purpose: thy former mistresses,
‘ who were insignificant slaves, were dis-
‘ missed. She who personated the feign-
‘ ed Cadiga, acted her part to admira-
‘ tion; and, with the artful contrivance
‘ of having a rose-bud painted on her
‘ breast, a mark which your young fa-
‘ vourite really bore from nature, she
‘ had cunning and address enough to
‘ impose herself on you for the very
‘ Cadiga whom you formerly loved.

‘ I believe, proceeded the sultan;
‘ you are by this time convinced, that
‘ there was nothing supernatural in the
‘ several events of your life, and that
‘ you were in reality nothing more than
‘ the dupe of your own folly and avarice.

‘ Thou mayest remember, after this
‘ period, that, sated with voluptuous-
‘ ness, thy licentious heart began to
‘ grow hardened; and from rioting with-
‘ out controul in pleasures, which,
‘ however criminal in themselves, carry
‘ at least with them the excuse of temp-
‘ tation, thou wantonly didst stir up,
‘ and indulge the latent cruelty of thy
‘ nature. Thy ungoverned passions led
‘ thee to an act of blood! thou piercedst
‘ with thy poniard the honest creature
‘ who remonstrated with thee on thy
‘ evil works; but Heaven did not, how-
‘ ever, permit thee to deprive her of life.

‘ See, Nourjahad, of what the heart
‘ of man is capable, when he shuts his
‘ eyes against the precepts of our holy
‘ prophet. Thou stoodst as it were alone
‘ in the creation; and, self-dependent for
‘ thy own happiness or misery, thou
‘ lookedst not for rewards or punish-
‘ ments in that invisible world, from
‘ which thou thoughtest thyself by thy
‘ own voluntary act excluded.

‘ This last barbarous deed, however,
‘ called aloud for chastisement; and thou
‘ wast for the third time deceived with a
‘ belief that thou hadst slept a number of
‘ years, in which many mortifying revo-
‘ lutions had happened in thy family.

‘ I was now resolved to be myself an
‘ eye-witness of thy behaviour, and to
‘ try if there was any spark of virtue
‘ remaining in thy soul which could
‘ possibly be rekindled.

‘ I disguised myself in the habit of a
‘ slave; and having altered my face, and
‘ my voice, I presented myself to thee
‘ under the name of Cozro. Thou
‘ knowest what passed between us on thy
‘ first awaking from thy compelled slum-
‘ bers, and that I heard and saw with
‘ what

what indifference thou receivedst the news of my supposed death.—But I will not reproach thee with ingratitude; let the memory of *that* be buried with the rest of thy errors.

I had soon the satisfaction to find that thou wast as it were a new man. The natural goodness of thy disposition, thy reason, thy experience of the deceitfulness of worldly enjoyments, joined to the remorse which thou couldst not help feeling for a series of vice and folly, at length roused thee to a just sense of what thou owedst to the dignity of thy own nature, and to the duties incumbent on thee towards the rest of thy fellow-creatures.

I now discovered, with joy, that thou hadst intirely divested thyself of that insatiable love of pleasure to which thou hadst before addicted thyself, and that thou no longer didst regard wealth, but as it enabled thee to do good. There was but one trial more remained. "If," said I, "his repentance be sincere, and he has that heroism of mind which is inseparable from the truly virtuous, he will not shrink at death; but, on the contrary, will look upon it as the only means by which he can obtain those refined enjoyments suited to the divine part of his nature, and which are as much superior in their essence, as they are in their duration, to all the pleasures of sense."

I made the trial.—The glorious victory, O Nourjahad, is thine! By thy contempt of riches, thou hast proved how well thou deservedst them; and thy readiness to die, shews how fit thou art to live.

In the space of fourteen moons, (for it is no longer since I first imposed on thy credulity the belief of thy miraculous state) thou hast had the experience of four times so many years. Such assuredly would be the vicissitudes of thy life, hadst thou in reality possessed what thou didst in imagination. Let this dream of existence, then, be a lesson to thee for the future, never to suppose that riches can ensure happiness; that the gratification of our passions can satisfy the human heart; or that the immortal part of our nature will suffer us to taste unmixed felicity, in a world which was never meant for our final place of abode. Take thy amiable Mandana to thee for a wife, and receive the fixed confidence and love of Schemzeddin.

The history says, that Nourjahad was from that minute raised to be the first man in power next to the sultan; that his wisdom and virtue proved an ornament and support to the throne of Persia, during the course of a long and prosperous life; and that his name was famous throughout the Eastern world.

FINIS.



LETTERS

FROM

FELICIA TO CHARLOTTE;

CONTAINING

A SERIES OF THE MOST INTERESTING EVENTS,

INTERSPERSED WITH

MORAL REFLECTIONS;

CHIEFLY TENDING TO PROVE THAT THE SEEDS OF VIRTUE ARE IM-
PLANTED IN THE MIND OF EVERY REASONABLE BEING.

BY MR. COLLYER. (*Joseph*)

IN TWO VOLUMES.



L O N D O N;

Printed for HARRISON and Co. N^o 18, Paternoster Row,

M DCC LXXXVIII.

LETTERS

RELICIA TO CHARLOTTE

CONTAINS

A SERIES OF THE MOST INTERESTING EVENTS

RELATIONSHIP WITH

ROYAL AFFILIATIONS

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED BY THE READER

THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM



IN TWO VOLUMES

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FELICIA TO CHARLOTTE.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

LETTER I.

DEAR MADAM,

AFTER a long journey that took up four days, I arrived last week at my aunt's, where, I suppose, I am to stay a considerable time; in which I assure you my chief uneasiness will consist in being separated from you; and that, you may depend upon it, will be great enough o' conscience. However, to pass away some of my hours, which I foresee will lie pretty heavy upon my hands, I will send you an account of all that happens worth your notice: but you must not be offended, if I tell you I write as much to amuse myself as to please you; since this employment will not only be a recreation to me, but will flatter and soothe my friendship; and, in some measure, compensate for the want of your company. I shall always, while I am writing, think I am talking to you; and am even now delighted with the idea of that pleasing intercourse of minds we shall probably enjoy at this distance. How agreeable is the thought, that, as often as you hear from me, you will learn every thing that passes in the soul of your friend; whilst I, in return, shall meet with the same proof of an open undisguised friendship from you! For my part, I intend to discover all the secret folds of my heart, and to unbosom myself to you without the least reserve, as I am persuaded I shall never have any secrets which you have not a right to be acquainted with, and which I shall not

be very ready to communicate. Pray do you follow my example; write with the same unreserved freedom, and never disguise those little affairs in which your heart is concerned; for these things, I think, my friendship gives me a peculiar right to know.

I am now I don't know how many miles distant from dear London, the seat of your joys; and must not expect for a long time to see again the Mall, the play-house, or the drawing-room; but I begin to fancy, that in a month or two I shall be reconciled to gloomy shades, tall trees, murmuring brooks, and all the sylvan scenes which surround me; and even cease to regret my distance from the genteel diversions of the gay and polite world; for if plain and simple Nature can ever appear agreeable, it must be here, where she shews herself in all her beauties. What a change have I already undergone! I rise at least three or four hours sooner than I ever did in my life before, and even go to bed long before midnight. Instead of the rattling of coaches, I now hear only the rustling of leaves, or the warbling of birds; and, instead of rich perfumes, my senses are regaled with the milder fragrance of nature.

Nay, pr'ythee, my dear, don't laugh at me: I am yet neither poet nor lover, nor do I find that I am in the least danger of being either of them. You, I know, cannot perceive any charms in such a rude retreat, fit to engage the attention of a fine lady. Here are no powdered beaux, or gilt equipages, none of the splendid allurements with which

ladies of your vivacity are apt to be captivated: but, for my part, a natural tincture of gravity may possibly make me more easily support the absence of what your gayer disposition may induce you to consider as the very essence of happiness.

My aunt, I find, is a lady of plain good sense, and of a most free, easy, and engaging behaviour; but, as to her person, it is far from being agreeable; her face is of an immoderate length; her eyebrows large, and very dark; and her nose of a more than ordinary size: but, notwithstanding this, she has an air of affability and good-nature spread over her countenance, which, at the first view, inspires every one that sees her with a pleasing confidence. Her easy, condescending goodness, her sweetness, affability, and complaisant freedom, diffuse over the minds of the meanest objects such a self-complacency, such an unreserved frankness of heart, as renders it impossible for them, in her company, to be stiffened by an uneasy restraint. The lowest being that bears the stamp of the human nature is an object of her regard: she puts herself upon a level with them in her conversation, and even uses a language different from her own, in order to suit her discourse to their ideas, and to make them understand her advice, the consolation she offers them, and the friendly concern she feels for their happiness. As to her stature, it is something above the ordinary height, though she is a little awry; and, indeed, she has nothing about her that speaks the accomplished lady, though every body that sees her must immediately think (I should rather say, *feel*) her a very good one. In short, she is a woman of great prudence, and a perfect œconomist, and therefore her thoughts seem equally divided between the management of her own family and a generous care for the welfare of those who apply to her for assistance. The education of her children makes up a great part of her felicity; it is a delightful employment, which she knows how to render as agreeable to them as to herself. The young ladies have been accustomed from their infancy to share with her in the delicate pleasure of communicating happiness; and have learnt from her, and an English Seneca, which they have almost by heart, the most engaging way of doing good. They have

a small salary at their own disposal; and their good mother tells me, she often feels her heart glow with a secret pleasure at seeing them dry up the tears of the distressed, with that money with which they had intended to purchase some fashionable piece of vanity, or some ornamental trifle. The old gentleman, my uncle, who died about seven years ago, left her with four children, and a large estate, but very much incumbered with mortgages, which, by her prudent management, she has lately paid off. And she would now be very happy, had she not a son, whose brutal extravagance and debaucheries render her extremely anxious for his welfare. This young man is about eighteen, of a robust constitution, pretty fat, and with a countenance perfectly expressive of the dulness and stupidity of his mind, which has been too rough to be polished by a most free and liberal education; but as he is going to make the tour of Europe, I shall probably never have occasion to mention him again. The eldest daughter I have not seen yet, she being lately married to a gentleman at a considerable distance from hence. Amelia, her sister, is a lady agreeable in her person, and happy in the possession of a calm, yet sedate mind; her passions seem to be regular, her thoughts just, her language unaffected, soft, and flowing. After this short character, you cannot wonder, that I no sooner knew her, than I conceived a friendship for her, which I am persuaded is now become reciprocal. Polly, the youngest daughter, is not quite ten years old; she is a lovely creature, of a most promising genius, and has such an earnest thirst after knowledge, that her pretty questions frequently give me a very high satisfaction.

With these two young ladies, and some other agreeable companions, I spend great part of my time. The sun is no sooner risen, than we take a walk, and taste the freshness of the morning air in some of those rural scenes which surround our house; while the innocent gaiety of my new friends gives an alacrity to my spirits, which is greatly heightened by the softness of these early breezes, and the various scenes of natural beauty which every way present themselves to our view.

But it is time to conclude, since I have written enough for my first letter, and therefore shall only add, what your affection

affection will, I am sure, make you most solicitous to know; that is, that I am perfectly well, and have no other uneasiness than what arises from my distance from you. I am, dear Charlotte, yours most affectionately,

FELICIA.

LETTER II.

THE pleasure, dear Madam, you express at hearing from me, is such a proof of your affection, that I cannot help taking notice of it. The endearments of a friend have something so extremely charming in them, that it is impossible we should be insensible of their value. If flattery easily insinuates itself into our hearts, it is chiefly because it soothes our desire of pleasing; but how much sweeter are the caresses of a person on whose esteem we found our happiness, and whose satisfaction rebounds back, and gives us who confer it a kind of self-approbation! So much for preface.

Two or three days after I sent you my letter, my cousin Amelia proposed our taking an airing in the coach the next morning, as soon as it was light, which was accordingly put in practice: but we had not gone far, before the stillness of the air, and the novelty of the prospect to me, induced us to walk. A sandy rock, out of which were cut huge caverns that seemed ready to fall, was on our left, and by a delightful contrast set off the spacious meadows and fields which, on the right, extended to an inconceivable distance, where our sight was only bounded by a clear sky, that seemed to meet the ground; and in some places by hills which could hardly be distinguished from the gilded clouds in which they wrapped themselves. Our eye, at one view, took in abundance of little villages, which arising from amidst the trees at a great distance, agreeably diversified this delightful landscape.

Whilst we walked on, discoursing on several agreeable subjects, I observed that the scene presently changed, and these precipices terminated in a high and steep

hill, so full of tall trees and shrubs, that it formed a most delightful grove. The grass here was mixed with beds of violets and primroses, which diffused a charming fragrance through the air. Here we sat down to refresh ourselves on the banks of a small fountain, which with a gentle murmur ran from a cavity under the hill; and, after having drank some of the water out of a basin which was chained to the side of it, we struck into a narrow winding path, and began to mount the eminence, to take in a larger view of the vernal beauties of this delightful scene; when I observed a fine river†, which with serpentine meanders added to the beauty of the whole. But while we were listening to the different warblings of a number of birds of various kinds, and observing the rabbits scudding along, and skipping at our approach into their burrows, we were interrupted from our contemplations of these trifling amusements, by a voice that at once seized and fixed our attention; for we were near enough to hear distinctly every word; though, when we looked around us, we could discover no human object near. The unknown person seemed engaged in a contemplation of the harmony of nature; and with a soft, yet manly voice, spoke the following rhapsody—

‘O Nature! how beautiful, how lovely, are all thy works! With what pleasure do I gaze around, and view the vast profusion of wisdom and infinite skill that surrounds me! Blessed retreat! where every object leads me to explore the bounteous Author of all goodness, who thus distributes his favours to man, and teaches us to converse with him in promoting the universal good. While Heaven, all communicative Heaven, thus profusely showers down it’s blessings, and imparts to us all that can charm our senses, or ravish our grateful minds with innocent delight, shall we with contracted arts confine our pleasure to the narrow limits of selfish passions, and not rather exert our utmost abilities, in order to disperse a flood of joy; and render the beautiful, the harmonious scene, complete?—But, ah!

* Left this description should be thought romantick, the Editor thinks himself obliged to inform the publick, that this and the rest of the landscapes are actually situated near Nottingham; and that these ladies, he supposes, resided in a village not far distant from that town.

† The river Trent.

• how small a share can I contribute to
 • the great design? lost in a manner
 • amidst the immensity of nature, like a
 • single flower amidst the numberless
 • number which enamel this verdant
 • carpet, or a small plant in this vernal
 • landscape, too minute singly to gain
 • the attention, and which could not be
 • missed out of the blooming scene!—But
 • why do I complain? Am I not suffi-
 • ciently happy, if, amidst the works of
 • my Creator, I can, like them, by ful-
 • filling the duties of my narrow sphere,
 • promote the general splendor and har-
 • mony of the whole? If the inanimate
 • creation can give such pleasures to a
 • rational mind, how much nobler must
 • be the satisfaction with which superior
 • beings view the beauteous order of
 • the more noble, the intellectual world,
 • when the passions and inclinations of
 • the mind compose an harmonious
 • scene, infinitely more lovely than the
 • finest and most elegant dispositions of
 • matter!

Here the voice stopped. Perhaps we
 were discovered through the trees, and the
 unknown person was displeased at being
 interrupted in his private reverie. How-
 ever, curiosity made us proceed; for I
 was very desirous of knowing the
 stranger, whose sentiments and language
 had prejudiced me very much in his
 favour.

I do not know, my dear, what you
 will think of our adventure; but, for my
 part, I formed a most amiable idea of
 the person of this stranger, though I had
 never seen him; and his words made
 such an impression upon my heart, that
 I believe I have repeated every syllable:
 but the graceful manner, and the musick
 of his voice, are what I can never give
 you the least idea of; for, upon my
 word, they were quite inexpressible.

Amelia endeavoured now to persuade
 me to return; but I was too much
 charmed with what I had heard to con-
 sent to do it immediately. Prompted by
 a little female curiosity, I resolved, if
 possible, to steal at least one view of this
 stranger, which I did not doubt but I
 might easily do without being perceived.
 She laughed at my motive; but, how-
 ever, at my entreaties, consented to fol-
 low me. I then struck into one of the
 winding paths which lay on the side
 from whence I heard the voice; but had
 not gone far, when, looking back, I
 missed my companion. This at once

alarmed me, and made me very uneasy,
 both on her account and my own. I
 stood still—I listened. I returned back,
 stopping every moment to look around
 me; but, just as I regained the place from
 whence I engaged her to accompany me
 in this foolish expedition, I heard a
 rustling of the leaves at a small distance,
 when my heart suddenly leaped with
 joy at the thought of having found again
 my friend: but was quite mistaken;
 for, instead of her, a young man ap-
 peared from amidst the boughs. He
 came to me with an air of respect.—But
 I shall forbear giving a description of
 his person till I can give you that of his
 mind; and that must not be till I know
 him better, which I hope will not be
 long. However, I must tell you, that
 I believe it was the same who had a few
 minutes before so agreeably engaged my
 attention. He no sooner came up to
 me, than he observed the disorder of my
 countenance, which in a moment was
 imprinted upon his; when, making me
 a low bow—‘May I presume to ask,
 ‘Madam,’ said he, with a trembling
 voice, and a most expressive look, ‘what
 ‘it is that discomposes you? Are you
 ‘alone?’—‘Yes, Sir,’ returned I; ‘I
 ‘have lost my companion, a young lady,
 ‘who, I imagine, is in equal pain to
 ‘find me.’—‘Well, Madam,’ replied
 he, with an ingenuous look, ‘might I
 ‘hope that you would put yourself un-
 ‘der the protection of a stranger, I
 ‘would gladly offer my service to wait
 ‘upon you till you rejoin the lady.’
 Here he glanced his eyes upon me, as if
 to anticipate my answer; but immedi-
 ately cast them down to the ground, and,
 I think, a sigh escaped him.

Though I was under no apprehension
 as to the behaviour of this young gentle-
 man, yet I could not help hesitating a
 little, to consider what answer I should
 make him. I was apprehensive that, should
 my cousin find me in his company, she
 might think I avoided her with design;
 and this might possibly not only disgust
 her, but give her some thoughts to my
 prejudice: besides, in the opinion of the
 world, it might not be thought decent
 for me to be found so early, in such a
 retired place, with a man whom I had
 never seen before, and to whose cha-
 racter I must confess myself an utter
 stranger. But these reflections would
 doubtless have given way to my inclina-
 tions, had not the young gentleman,
 perceiving



R. Smirke. del.

Milton. Sculp.

Life I.

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perceiving that I continued silent, resumed—'I see, Madam, you are afraid of trusting yourself with me; I cannot blame your caution, and will therefore leave you, in order to seek the lady whose absence seems to give you some pain; and shall think myself very happy if my endeavours should restore your quiet.'—'This is a very obliging proposal, Sir,' returned I; 'and I gladly take you at your word: meanwhile, I will wait here to learn your success; but I am ashamed to give you this trouble.'—'I have no other trouble, Madam,' returned he, 'than in separating myself from you. But I ought not to complain, since it is to serve you.'

Here he retired; but had not been gone long, before I saw him return with precipitation; when he told me that he saw a lady walking down the hill; on which I permitted him to conduct me out of the wood, took my leave of him, and presently rejoined her.

Amelia was too angry with me to forbear reproaching me for the uneasiness I had given her, though she expressed her resentment in the most obliging terms; but was soon pacified, when she found it was done without design, and I had been equally troubled on her account: and, indeed, my uneasiness had been a sufficient punishment for my indiscretion. But I have troubled you too long with things of no consequence; and will only add, that we made haste to our coach, and were driven home to breakfast.

Pray give my respects where due; and do me the justice to think me, dear Charlotte, the sincerest and most affectionate of your friends,

FELICIA.

LETTER III.

WELL, well, my dear, you may be as merry as you will with my romantick adventure, as you are pleased to call it. I do not wonder at your laughing at me, for I had penetration enough to foresee it; however, that could not prevent my giving you a faithful account of this extraordinary ramble; for I had rather you should be a little merry at my expence, than I be such a rebel to friendship, as to conceal any of my pleasures or pains from you. But if what I related

in my last may appear too trifling to deserve your notice, I do not doubt but I shall atone for the trouble I have given you in reading it, by describing scenes more interesting.

The person you are pleased, in the gaiety of your heart, to call some sylvan deity, who you suppose inhabits the enchanting groves, the Arcadian scenes you say I have described, is a mere earthly being, as very a mortal as you or I; and the native beauties of this rural retreat, notwithstanding what you are pleased to insinuate to the contrary, are so far from being heightened by my description, that, were you with me, you would hardly think I had done them justice. But while you are attracted by the charms of your young admirer's dress and splendid equipage, and dazzled with the glitter of a court, no wonder you think these humbler scenes, these innocent and simple charms, which please me, are almost wholly fictitious, and little else but the invention of a luxuriant fancy—a sort of fairy land, that exists no where but in my own imagination.

I saw the amiable youth I am now to describe to you at church last Sunday. The moment I cast my eyes upon him, I observed his fixed upon me; and, to make an ingenuous confession, I felt my heart instantly flutter with a very agreeable emotion. I had for several days longed to see him; and could not now help feeling a secret joy at finding my wishes granted. But I observed, at the same time, that he was in no danger of appearing singular by the regards he cast upon me; for as I was the gayest lady in the whole assembly, every body, as soon as I arose up, incessantly gazed at me. When the service was over, I grew impatient to know if he would speak to me: I fancied he would; at least, I wished it. I saw him wait at the door—I saw it with pleasure—and went out with my aunt and cousins, filled with a formidable idea of his perfections. But how was I mortified, when, after having addressed himself to my aunt and her daughters, and paid them some civil compliments, he took his leave, only making me a low bow, even without opening his lips to me!

Could any thing, Madam, be more provoking than this behaviour? Not that I was in love with him—at least, I was resolved not to think I was. But to see him so insensible of my attractions! intolerable!

intolerable! Not to say one civil thing to me! what stupidity! If I had been ever so ugly, he could have done no more! But, however awkward this fit of resentment may appear in me, especially while I declare that I have my heart in my own possession, yet I had really some reason for it. There is certainly a pleasure in thinking ourselves beloved by a man of sense; and if I was not actually in love, I had a very great ambition to make him so. He would have been a most agreeable conquest; and I should doubtless have thought his addresses a greater honour than those of a thousand coxcombs.

The next day, however, I had the pleasure of seeing him at my aunt's, and could not help flattering myself that I was the cause of his visit. We had just dined; and Amelia, having taken up one of the volumes of the Spectator, was reading the affecting story of Ince and Yarico, when he entered the parlour; and, paying us some compliments, seated himself near the door; desiring, at the same time, that he might not interrupt our entertainment. As my cousin had been used to treat him with all imaginable freedom, she concluded her story, and we entered upon a conversation on the nature of ingratitude; a subject that afforded the young gentleman a happy opportunity of discovering the delicacy of his sentiments. He said a thousand things equally entertaining and instructive, and enlivened his discourse with abundance of tender, generous, and manly thoughts: but at last, my aunt being called out of the room, her daughters soon followed her. I was now in the most desirable situation, and began to prepare myself for hearing a conversation infinitely more interesting. But how great, how inconceivable, was my surprise, to find the person, who a minute before entertained us with such elegance of thought and expression, instantly become speechless! After fixing his eyes upon me for some time, he arose; and, with an air that expressed a tender diffidence, changed his seat, and sat near me; but still continued silent. His eyes, which had a remarkable languor, and a pleasing softness, were still fixed upon me, but I no sooner met his glances, than, with a disordered look, he cast them to the floor. I endeavoured in vain to resume the conversation; he replied with such a tender diffidence as would not

suffer him to proceed: his words faltered on his lips, and were uttered with so much confusion, that it was not difficult to observe the struggle he had with his heart, and the pleasing source of his embarrassment.

Ah, Madam! could I desire a more agreeable triumph? You, perhaps, had you been in my place, would have laughed heartily at seeing him look silly; would have ridiculed this softness of soul; and, with your usual sprightliness, have diverted yourself at beholding a man so over-awed by your charms as to give such proofs of his weakness before you: and, indeed, can any thing more agreeably flatter our vanity, or give us a higher opinion of our own attractions, than to see them make a fool of Good-sense, and strike Eloquence itself dumb? But, alas! I found myself little disposed to assume any such airs of barbarous gaiety. I was not much less weak than he, and could not help pitying, as well as blaming, that modest diffidence that gave him such pain: but this was a pity that was attended with a most exquisite pleasure; nor could I, indeed, have felt a greater at seeing him at my feet, had he even assumed the buskin, and entertained me with all the lofty and melting language of a hero in tragedy. Not all the passionate rants of a lover, who would persuade me to the folly of believing he was dying at my feet, and that his fate depended upon my smiles or frowns, could have given me half the proofs of a sincere passion that I now received.

As I promised to give you some idea of his perfections, I will endeavour to do it now: his silence left me at full liberty to examine his person; and I made use of this opportunity of doing it with the utmost freedom; and therefore, without the least flattery, I shall give you his portrait as follows.

You must know, then, that he is about twenty; and as to his stature, not much taller than I am; which, by the way, is much too short for the hero of a romance, who ought at least to be six feet high: his complexion is lively; his eyes blue and sparkling, and so very expressive, that they seem to discover, in the strongest manner, all the sensations of his heart—a heart that, I believe, would be a great loser, had it not for an interpreter to render all its emotions visible; since in his open countenance is painted

painted an ingenuous honesty, the most lively traces of all that is humane, friendly, and benevolent, mixed with an engaging modesty and simplicity of manners. His hair is of a dark brunette, and hangs in natural curls, which just touch his shoulders. As to his thoughts, they seem bent on the improvement of his mind; and the love of truth and virtue—antiquated perfections!—are so deeply impressed there, that he seems to have very little idea of those fancied charms, those fashionable accomplishments, which are necessary to form the character of the fine gentleman; nay, the awkward creature does not appear to have the least notion of the art of handling a snuff-box with a grace; does not even know how to murder the reputation of those who are absent, or flatter those that are present; and though he seems very assiduous to please me, he has not, I can tell you, had the complaisance to let me know that he thinks I have more charms than his grandmother.

You have now, my dear Charlotte, a right to form what judgment you please upon the picture I have drawn. The modest rusticity of my spark, so very different from the confident addresses of the town beaux, must make him seem a very odd sort of a creature to you, who are so used to hear yourself praised in lofty strains, that you will, perhaps, be surprized that there should be any other way of touching the heart. But, for my part, however ridiculous his behaviour may appear to you, I cannot help telling you, that I found myself exceedingly moved with that tender diffidence and melting confusion, which, in spite of himself, discovered what I am persuaded he would very gladly have concealed. His silence itself, added to the several tender emotions I observed in his countenance, made some strange advances in my heart; and, to be sincere, I do not know what may be the effect of two or three more such tender interviews.

After this frank confession, I know you are more inclined to laugh at me than at him. Do so, if you please; I shall find an opportunity of laughing at you in my turn. But to proceed. My aunt at last rejoined us, after half an hour's absence; in which time I had not one gallant thing said to me, not a syllable that could tell he was my lover: every declaration of this kind was perfectly involuntary; nor do I know when

he will have resolution enough to unburthen his heart to me. But, however merry you may make yourself at this letter, I dare say you will be pleased with the confidence I repose in you, and with the fresh assurances I make you of being, dear Madam, your most sincere, and affectionate friend,

FELICIA.

LETTER IV.

DEAR CHARLOTTE,

I Do not think there is any occasion to make an apology for sending you this so soon after my last, though I have not yet received an answer to it. I know you are always glad to hear from me; and therefore, without ceremony, I follow the dictates of my heart, which lead me to communicate every thing to you that I have reason to flatter myself will be an agreeable amusement.

A few days ago, my aunt having engaged to spend a day or two with an elderly gentleman, who lives at a village a few miles distant from our house, they made me one of the party; and we accordingly set out in the coach. The old gentleman, who expected us, met us with his pipe in his mouth, and, in an agreeable friendly manner, paid us the compliments of his house before we arrived at it; and then conducted us home, smoking all the way at the coach-door. As soon as we entered his house, his unreserved behaviour rendered his company very diverting. He enlivened the conversation with abundance of merry stories, which his homourous and pleasant manner rendered vastly diverting; but the worst part of our entertainment consisted in our being obliged to bear with the impertinence of an old maiden lady, the gentleman's sister, who, out of an affectation of extraordinary piety and prudence, joined to an awkward air of over-strained modesty, assumed an authority that made her perfectly ridiculous. You never, in all your life, I dare say, beheld so compleat a prude: she would insinuate that there was a double meaning in the most innocent expressions; and would frequently set us upon searching for an indecent thought, where, I dare say, none but herself ever had any. This was the censor of the company, from whom our facetious friend often met with a sharp reprimand.

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• Fir,

'Fie, fie!' would she frequently cry, interrupting him, tossing up her head, and giving him a look of supercilious disdain, 'I protest you make me blush. Really you will oblige me to leave the room.' But the best of it was, that this gentleman's obscenity was like some people's wit, with this difference only, that as nobody can see that but themselves, so none of the company could find him guilty of a want of decency, but this experienced maid. Besides, her comments were an hundred times worse than the text. She must certainly have a most fruitful invention, as well as a very unchaste cast of mind; or else, I think it hardly possible that she should be so very intelligent in things, which it is the greatest glory of ladies in our circumstances not to understand. Modesty is the distinguishing virtue of our sex; nor can a gentleman violate it in our presence without being guilty of an unpardonable rudeness; but this virtue will never teach us to torture words and syllables to make them speak a sense of which the speaker had not the least idea. This would be to act entirely inconsistent with that love of decency to which we make pretensions.

But to return to our prude. You would have laughed to hear her (while with an air of the most ridiculous affectation she drew up her mouth) express her aversion for the nasty filthy creatures, the men. She is surprized that our sex can be so impudent as to marry. And though she has had the greatest and most advantageous offers, (which, by the way, her small remains of beauty and sense would not tempt one to believe) she could never be prevailed upon so much as to think with patience on the nasty odious things.

Severe as this lady was upon the old gentleman, he was not much behind her in his replies, in which he raillied her so agreeably, that I could almost forgive her impertinence on account of the pleasant remarks it occasioned.

As soon as dinner was over, she began with a severe censure upon the weakness and depravity of human nature, which opened the way for abundance of devout scandal and pious defamation. And as this gave her a happy occasion of mentioning, by way of illustration, the real or imaginary vices of her neighbourhood, she seemed to talk on this subject with an unusual satisfaction.

Her immaculate soul triumphed over the crimes of the multitude, and made her look down upon them with a sacred indignation. Every foible was represented in the most glaring light, and a reason given for all the accidents which had happened within her notice. Elated with the most pompons ideas of her own spotless virtue, she pretended to know why one was thrown from his horse, why another was robbed, or another dangerously ill of a fever; and pointed out the respective crimes which were the cause of each disaster; while her misfortunes, on the contrary, were only the trials of an indulgent Providence. What an admirable artifice to extinguish the generous impressions of humanity, and to render the heart insensible to pity! to blot out all the traces of the Deity, and stamp the brute on the reasonable soul! But what, if possible, added to the cruelty and inhumanity of her slanders was, her indirect insinuations, artfully mixed with a pretended air of friendship, which were a greater insult on those she aspersed than her more open invectives. 'Alas!' cried she, with a sigh, 'who would think that my dear friend—I won't mention her name; my regard for her will not suffer me to do that; but she does not live many doors from us—I say, who would think that so fine a lady, with such a modest and artless look, was not as perfect in her virtue as she is in the symmetry of her person! But I am glad she has kept her folly to herself; and indeed am too much her friend ever to divulge it. I have heard, indeed, a little whisper—but no matter what they say of her: I hope it only proceeds from malice and ill-nature. O fie! how can people slander one another at this rate! to be sure, it is very wicked of them.'

'Yes, doubtless, Madam,' replied the old gentleman, interrupting her with a sneer; 'we know you are very sensible of the malignity of this crime.' Here he winked at my aunt, shrugged up his shoulders, and she proceeded—'Yes, Heaven knows slander is my aversion,' resumed she, 'and I would not, for the world, be guilty of it. What if she is not so slender as she used to be; she may be troubled with the dropsy, you know. I love to put the best construction upon every thing.'

'Slender! Madam,' replied our old friend,

friend, smiling with an air of indignation; 'I saw that lady yesterday, and upon my word I never beheld a finer shape, or a more easy air; I could not help taking particular notice of her.'—'How! Sir,' cried she, with a look that expressed her disappointment and confusion; 'I am persuaded you don't know who I mean.'—'Yes, Madam, I do,' returned he; 'and between you and I, however you conceal names, you are always sure to point your invectives in such a manner, that nobody can mistake the person they are levelled at. This shew of friendship is only a pretence, a specious artifice to wound the deeper. Don't you think, ladies,' continued he, turning to us, 'that my sister, with her white unsullied virtue, must appear to great advantage, while she is surrounded by such a black neighbourhood? How beautiful must a swan look in the midst of a flock of ravens!'

She was now as red as fire, and was doubtless going to make a severe reply, when, to my no small satisfaction, the conversation was diverted by a gentleman's entering the room, with a young lady of genteel appearance, and a person formed to prepossess every one in her favour. Our good-natured prude seemed a little confounded at their presence; but soon recovering herself, ran to embrace the lady, with such an appearance of sincerity, that I began to think her more capable of friendship than I had before imagined; but while she was lavishing upon this stranger the most ardent caresses, and with an excess of complaisance, thanking her for her visit, my aunt told me, that this was the lady she had a minute before so cruelly aspersed under the character of a friend.

All this while I had not taken notice of the gentleman who was brother to this injured lady; but when he was come up to us, I was seized with a sudden flow of joy at seeing him the amiable youth I described to you in my last. But you can't imagine what an effect this discovery had upon me: the moment I cast my eyes upon his sister, and considered her as a lady vilely slandered by the person who was now embracing her, I could not, at first, forbear taking her part against the prude, and being highly offended at her hypocrisy; but now when I considered her as the sister of this engaging youth, for whom I felt

some of the most tender sentiments, I could not help regarding the prude as a monster, and entering into the injured lady's sufferings, with a very different kind of indignation. The affront was become much nearer and more sensible than it was before. And indeed, nothing but my regard for peace could have prevented my cautioning her, whom I now considered as my friend, against one who could stab with a smile, and sting the person she hugged to her bosom. Lucius, for that is the young gentleman's name, saluted my aunt and cousins with an air the most free and engaging; but when he came to me, methought a timorous confusion rendered his compliments hardly intelligible. However, he took a chair, when the old squire, with his usual freedom, cried out, at the same time taking him by the hand, 'Well, my young philosopher, I am heartily glad to see you. Here is a lady in company has been degrading human nature most unmercifully; and has even asserted that we have all a natural propensity to commit the blackest crimes. Ods my life, if I had been able to have managed an argument against her on such a difficult subject, I should have thought myself obliged to vindicate the honour of my own species; but now you are here, you must even do it for me. I am not willing to think myself a villain, nor would I maintain such an ill opinion of my friends; but have you resolution enough, my boy, to vindicate your own sentiments when they oppose those of the ladies?'

'Yes, Sir,' returned he, smiling, 'when their honour is to be supported; but I hope there are none here that have really such unworthy thoughts of themselves and us. For my part,' continued he, with an air perfectly graceful, 'I think there can't be a greater reflection on the Author of Nature, on his wisdom and goodness, on his spotless purity, than this opinion, which at once renders man an object of detestation and abhorrence, and his Creator unworthy the title of the Father of his rational creation: a title which reflects a glory upon our species, and which springs from the most resplendent as well as endearing attribute of the Deity.'

'If we impartially survey the first impressions of nature, and the origin

of our passions, we shall find that those propensities which are not acquired, are on the side of virtue. The mind of the infant no sooner begins to open and expand, than he feels the dawn of reason: the bright radiant stream of heavenly light pours into his soul, and he sees at once the natural deformity of some actions, and the native charms and intrinsic loveliness of others. But even before reason can take place, and while this resplendent ray of the Deity is too glimmering to direct him in the paths of truth and virtue, he feels within him an internal and moral sense, which distinguishes between virtue and vice, beauty and deformity, harmony and discord. He is delighted with striking colours; he is charmed with the melting warbling of a well-touched instrument; he is terrified with the braying of an ass, a shriek, or a clap of thunder. But whence can arise these various sensations of pleasure, or of pain? Whence can spring these early ideas of harmony, proportion, and beauty, if they are not founded in the constitution of nature, if there is not an internal sense, a natural taste by which they are qualified to discern them? Virtue is the musick of the soul, the harmony of the passions; it is the order, the symmetry, the interior beauty of the mind; the source of the truest pleasures, the fountain of the sublimest and most perfect happiness. But let us have recourse to nature, and see if this be not the case. How early does the little creature feel sentiments of gratitude in return for the tender care of it's nurse! How early is it intendered by the social affections of pity and compassion? And how pleasingly does every natural gush of soft affection swell it's breast, and pour from it's pretty eyes! But why does it experience these tender feelings of the soul? For what reason does the untaught mind start back from spectacles of violence and horror? Why is it moved with pity? Why is it shocked and wounded? Why does it bleed at miseries in which itself has no immediate concern? Is it not because it is naturally virtuous, naturally compassionate and sympathising?

What a delightful representation, cried Amelia, with an expressive smile, have you given us of human nature! How very different from those gloomy

discourses we daily hear of the wretchedness and deformity of all the race of Adam! Too many of our clergy seem to take a peculiar pleasure in degrading mankind, as if they thought there was no other way of exalting the Deity, than by debasing his offspring; and this they do by representing us as born in guilt, and naturally incapable of performing the least action, either virtuous in itself or acceptable to our Maker.—‘It is very true,’ replied my aunt; ‘but, in my opinion, nothing can be more injurious to the cause of virtue than such false representations. For my part, as I have carefully attended to the actions and behaviour of children, in their most early infancy, I can say from experience, that I have never beheld the least traces of this natural turpitude, which is the subject of so many pompous harangues; but as I cannot be supposed to have carried my reflections of this kind so far as Lucius, who, I find, has made this subject his study, I shall desire him to run through the most particular of those vices which are supposed to lurk in our hearts, in order to shew that they have no real existence in the constitution of our nature.—But what you have said, Sir,’ added she, addressing herself to Lucius, ‘brings to my mind a circumstance, which may farther illustrate your opinion of the moral sense, and prove by a familiar instance, that it is really founded in nature, and not merely a plausible representation of what we wish to be true. But, not to keep you any longer in suspense: some years ago, as I was at work in my parlour next the hall, I was alarmed at hearing somebody fall down stairs; and my daughter Polly giving a shriek at the same time, I ran in a terrible fright to assist my child. But, with what surprize was I seized, to see, instead of her, a young man whom I had entertained the day before, lying upon the floor, who arose the moment I entered the hall! The dear little creature, who had been the instant before at play, stood speechless; she was struck with compassion; her lips were pale, her cheeks were wet with tears, her joints trembled. I pressed her to tell me what was the matter, but could obtain no other answer than—*The man! the man!* In short, her whole soul was in such an agony, that it was some time

time before I brought her to herself. This story, I assure you, is fact; and I would desire this lady, if she can, to account for this tender flow of benevolence and compassion in a child of three years old: an age in which she herself must allow, that reason could have no share in the emotions of her heart.

Really, Madam, replied the religious prude, in a peevish tone, 'I am astonished to hear you. I thought you had been more orthodox than to assert such strange opinions. I am sorry to see that your fondness for your child has such an unhappy effect, as to shut your eyes against the truths of our religion. I will warrant you now you don't believe original sin. Don't we see every where the perverseness of children? But to be sure you won't see it—you don't know that they are given to lying, pride, and every vice they are capable of committing. One would think that experience alone would be sufficient to let us see that they are naturally wicked. Alas!' continued she, with a ridiculous whine, and at the same time shaking her head, 'these are proud thoughts; it is but too true, that our nature is sadly depraved, and that we are naturally inclined to all manner of crimes.'

You must permit me, Madam, to dissent from your opinion,' replied the engaging Lucius with a smile; 'and I think I am able to prove that nature, who has so early prejudiced the soul on the side of virtue, has not thrown in amongst her favours any of those baleful ingredients you mention. We receive nothing from the hands of the Supreme Being that is not like himself, perfectly good; nothing that he might not communicate consistent with his infinite benevolence: and therefore all I can grant is, that this moral sense, like the light of reason, is not in every one equally strong, refined and delicate, though it is in all capable of directing to the pursuit of what is amiable and praise-worthy. As to the perverseness of children, their lying, pride, and whatever else you are pleased to lay to their charge, they are easily accounted for. They have not only ill examples, but are taught to be vicious. Pains are taken to make them so; and the fond mother, without design, acts as if she laboured to erase out of it's mind the pure impressions of nature*. But I shall leave this subject, and endeavour to prove, that the several vices laid to our charge have not their source from nature.'

* The judicious Mr. Locke considers this subject in a very particular manner. 'If we look into the common management of children,' says he, 'we shall have reason to wonder that there are any footsteps of virtue left in the world. What vice can be named which parents do not season them with, and drop into them the seeds of, as soon as they are capable to receive them? I don't mean by the examples they give, which is encouragement enough; but that which I would take notice of here, is the downright teaching them vice. Give me a blow, and I will beat him, is a lesson which most children hear every day: this naturally fixes in their minds principles of revenge. They are taught to be proud of their cloaths long before they put them on, and to treat with contempt and insolence all who are not so well dressed as they; by which they render their hearts obdurate, and root out their natural sentiments of pity. Lying and equivocations are put into the mouths of young people, and commended in children, whilst they are for their parents advantage. Their minds are enervated by flattery, and luxury of every kind. Is my young master a little out of order, the question is, *What will my dear eat? What shall I get for thee?* Every body's invention is set on work to find out something luscious and delicate enough to prevail over the want of appetite, which nature has wisely ordered in the beginning of distempers, to prevent their increase.——He had the will of his maid before he could speak or go; he had the mastery of his parents ever since he could prattle; and why, now he is grown up, and is stronger and wiser than he was then, must he be restrained and curbed?—If his desires carry him to wine and women, they are objects as suitable to the longing of one of more years, as what he cried for, when little, were to the inclinations of a child.' See *Locke on Education*, page 34—46. But innumerable are the methods of instilling vice into the flexible mind of the infant. Their rewards render them incorrigibly obstinate, their punishments make impressions never to be erased. The *bobgoblin* is ever after a subject of terror; and the *poor unhappy stritch*, who was to take them away when they were naughty, has fixed deeply a contempt and aversion for objects of misery and distress. *The Editor.*

Avarice,

' Avarice, with all its black attendants, is confessedly a crime of old age, and seldom arrives at maturity till accompanied with grey hairs: nor can it have the least foundation in the constitution of our frame, since it can only be completed by time, and a constant war with ourselves. Every object of real misery, every instance of virtue in distress, demands our relief with such a forcible eloquence, that we are obliged to struggle with ourselves in order to suppress our rising compassion. The natural feelings of the heart, which on these occasions prompt every man to pity, cannot be erased without a degree of self-denial; a violence to reason, a violence to all the remains of humanity.

' As to lewdness, nature must utterly disclaim it. What man, that has the least remains of generosity, the least sense of pity, would not shudder at the thought of betraying the lovely innocent to guilt, and shame, and infamy? What man, that has not lost all the sense and understanding of a man, all the soft and noble impressions of humanity, and who was one step above a brute, would hesitate for a moment whether he should bridle or indulge an inclination, when the dreadful consequence lies so plainly before him—where misery, inevitable misery, must attend the partner of his pleasures?

' But this is not all: we have not only a moral sense, but a passion adapted to restrain our desires, and reduce them within proper bounds; a passion suited to soften and reform our minds, by inspiring the tenderest, most noble and delicate sentiments.' Here, giving me a look, he coloured, and at the same time suffered a sigh to escape him; but immediately endeavouring to recover himself from his confusion, which he strove in vain to conceal, he resumed—' But the force of love almost every one has experienced.'—' Ay, ay,' cried the old gentleman, laughing; ' and I don't question but every one here has felt its power. For my part, when I was a young man, I was a perfect innamorato.'—' Was you so?' cried the old maid: ' therefore, because you were such a fool, you must think, to be sure, that I have been so too. No, Sir, I assure you I was never guilty of that weakness.'—' If love, Madam, is a weakness,' replied Lucius with

some warmth, ' it is at least the noblest weakness we are liable to. Love refines and humanizes the mind, gives a delicacy to our conceptions, and renders us incapable of injuring, even in thought, the dear object of our soft affections; and, in fine, is a noble counterpoise to those desires which Providence has wisely given us, as it is directly calculated to prevent their carrying us beyond the bounds of reason and virtue. So the pleasing ties of friendship, mutual affection, and publick-spiritedness, whose charms are almost universally felt, are an additional guard against our degenerating into base, mercenary, and selfish animals.

' But as we have all these strong incitements to virtue, it may be asked, Why there is such a great degree of vice in the world? I answer, that it is owing to education; the continual temptation of present and sensible objects, and the powerful force of example. These suspend the generous and kindly impressions of humanity, petrify the tender heart, and make us shut our eyes and ears to pity.'

Here our old friend, who for some time seemed lost in the pleasure this conversation had given him, finding Lucius had done, arose up in a kind of extasy, when holding his pipe in his hand, he cried out in a theatrical tone—

" We are by nature virtuous, by nature
" soft and humane,

" 'Till selfish passions chill our young affections,

" And freeze the tender heart to icy hardness:

" No more distressed Virtue swells our breasts;

" No more we melt at others wants, and feel

" Those foreign cares with painful friendly smart

" And soft compassion. The inward struggle o'er,

" The conquest gained by the dire fury Vice,

" With Meducæan power we're chang'd to stone,

" To lifeless, senseless stone."—

Here, in the height of his rhapsody, he struck his pipe against the table, with a violence that made it fly into twenty pieces. The oddness of this whimsical behaviour made us immediately burst out a laughing, and in a moment dispersed that thoughtful air that our long attention

attention to this grave discourse had spread over our faces.

I don't know, my dear Charlotte, what idea this conversation will give you of this amiable youth; nor can I tell how you will like his sentiments; but this I am sure of, that you are very much obliged to me for being at all this pains in transcribing, what perhaps only my esteem for the speaker made me fancy something curious: though you, perhaps, may think it hardly worth your notice. You imagine now that I have got a very extraordinary memory; but, to be sincere, I have done little more than transcribe what my aunt prevailed upon Lucius to give her afterwards in writing upon the subject; which he might easily recollect, as he was the chief speaker, and the sentiments entirely his own.

But all this while I had no opportunity of a moment's separate conversation with this engaging young gentleman: my heart longed to be entertained with a more interesting subject; a subject that would have been infinitely more delightful to me than the most refined speculations, though accompanied with all the charms of eloquence, all the striking graces which attended his manner of expressing himself. And I freely confess, that I could not help thinking him a little tedious, though my reason assented to every thing he said. But when he had done, the approbation he received from almost all the company, so agreeably flattered my esteem, or, if you insist upon it, I will say my *love*, that I never experienced half the delight, when in my vainest moments I have listened to the flattering praises of my admirers. But it is time to conclude this long letter, and therefore I shall only add, that I am yours, &c.

FELICIA.

LETTER V.

MY DEAR CHARLOTTE,

HOW inimitably pretty is your way of raillery! I could not read your letter without breaking off at least half a dozen times to laugh at your whimsical conceits. But however, you are never likely to see my spark in lawn sleeves, though you say there needs little more than for him to mount the rostrum to obtain them. What a grotesque figure

have you drawn of a gaping congregation listening to his voice, while the soul of musick dwells upon his tongue, and all the ladies, charmed with his striking accents, surrender up their hearts, as I do, to the enchanting force of pleasing sounds and graceful action. Was that the case, I am of your mind, that amidst such a number of competitors, I might strive in vain to charm him; and therefore, was there any danger of his entering into holy orders, I should certainly use all the influence I have over him to prevent a step that you say would be so dreadfully fatal to my own repose. But, raillery apart, I will now return to my story.

In the evening we left our merry hospitable friend, and returned home without Lucius's having an opportunity of saying one tender thing to me; but his eyes, however, were less reserved, and methought entertained me with a language that I could easily understand. 'Ah! how much I love!' cried they, with a soft timidity; at least I fancied so: whilst an artless, sparkling glance of mine, in spite of myself, replied—'How much am I pleased that you should do so!' I know you can't keep your countenance at this mute kind of discourse; but really I am persuaded that it was very intelligible to us both, though it was so precipitate that nobody in the room could take notice of it. Why should we disguise our hearts, and teach our looks a reserve that we are far from feeling? These little arts should never be used to a man of sense and merit; as for the rest, we ought to have no care about them. Nor indeed need I blush to own, that this silent intercourse of souls gave me more pleasure than I ever received from any of my conquests. There is something noble in charming a youth of such exalted perfections; and, however insensible we may be when attacked by the impertinence of a fop, or a coxcomb, it would prove a want of the most laudable ambition not to be elated here, where fine sense, virtue, and an agreeable person, are so charmingly united.

As soon as we were seated in the coach, my aunt and cousins began to be very merry with the ridiculous character of the prude; when, at last, observing that I forebore joining in their conversation, Amelia tapped me hastily on the shoulder—'What is the matter?' cried she, with a pretty innocent giggle, at seeing me start;

start; 'one would be almost tempted to think you in love. Come, rouse yourself out of this reverie, and let us enjoy the benefit of your company. How do you like Lucius?'—'Like him!' replied I, with a blush; 'why, I don't know; pretty well.'—'She is thinking, perhaps, of her friends in town,' cried my aunt; 'or is it really this gentleman that employs your thoughts?' added she, addressing herself to me. 'Lucius is a very deserving man; and had he an estate any way equal to his merit, I could not wish you a greater happiness than to have him for a husband.'—'I was not thinking of a husband,' Madam, replied I, with as unconcerned an air as possible; 'but has he only a small fortune then? Pray what is his family? I suppose you can give me a particular account of it?' This was spoke with an aching heart oppressed with fears; for I could not help being alarmed at the very thought of a disparity of circumstances; for though we may have ever so little ambition ourselves, our friends have always a great deal for us, and perhaps are apt to carry it a little too far. They do not think as we do, and are almost always blind to merit when unattended with riches; for as they sincerely wish us every blessing, they cannot bear to think of our wanting so essential a one as that on which depends, in a great measure, the reputation, the ease, the honours of life; the most conspicuous and dazzling advantages.

My aunt, without any hesitation, replied—'My dear, you are in the right; I have been perfectly acquainted with Lucius's family for many years, and am very able to give you their history. His father was born to a small estate; but what made this a real misfortune was, that the very means which reduced his patrimony, gave him dispositions which rendered it the more difficult to support himself in the narrow bounds that were allotted him. He was educated amidst a round of pleasure, and saw nothing but luxury and extravagance from his most early infancy. He imbibed the same desires which had almost been the ruin of his father, and which have since had the same effect with respect to his own family. When he was between twenty and thirty, he paid his addresses to a young lady, who, besides a consider-

able fortune, and much beauty, had a sweetness of soul which gave a lustre to every other perfection. This was spread over her countenance, and appeared perfectly conspicuous in every look and every action. In short, he soon gained her affections, and, with the consent of her friends, married her. Poor woman! how much do I pity her! He no sooner got her fortune in his own hands, but, in spite of his good sense, (for this must be allowed him) he resumed those expensive diversions which he had before been obliged to lay aside for want of the means of supporting them. The pleasures of the bottle, horse-races, gaming, have ever since taken up all his time; while his poor lady is treated with a barbarous contempt and insolence; a cruel reward for her generosity in giving up her estate to him without reserve. But his son and daughter, far from following his example, shun the contagion of his vices as they would a pestilence; and for their sakes, as well as their mother's, I shall forbear giving a particular account of his debauches and irregularities. Alas! how unhappy, how doubly unhappy, must such a parent be, who meets with the keenest reproach even from the virtues of his children! How miserable must that man be, if he has the least sense of ingenuity, to find himself the disgrace of those whom nature hath rendered dear to him! an object of shame and pity to his own offspring! They love the man, though they detest his vices; and give him their affection, though they are constrained to withhold from him their esteem.'—'But, dear Madam,' cried I, with the tears standing in my eyes, which the darkness of the evening, however, concealed from observation, 'how does this admirable lady support this complicated distress? Can she have any tenderness for such a husband? One would think a conduct like this would undoubtedly extirpate all the softer passions from her breast, and leave no room for any thing but hatred and contempt. What other return can be made to ingratitude and cruelty?'—

'No, my dear,' replied my aunt, 'you have much too mean an opinion of this lady's goodness. There are very few in her circumstances, indeed, who would not fly out into the greatest ex-

travagance,

travagances, and keep no measures with a man who behaved with so little regard to the happiness of his family. They would make the house, whenever he was present, an almost perpetual scene of uproar; or, at least, would take all opportunities of publishing his vices and follies. But she, on the contrary, led by the sweetness of her temper, has endeavoured to make him sensible of the baseness of his conduct, by constantly shewing herself worthy of his esteem. She loves him still, in spite of his cruelty; and, I dare say, would think herself very happy if the loss of her estate would recover his heart; even if to obtain this blessing they were reduced to a state of meanneis and poverty. She has too much good sense not to see that quarrelling and ill humour, from her, would greatly increase his aversion, and not only widen the breach between them, but be attended with the most unhappy effects with respect to their children; since it would infallibly weaken their natural authority over them, make them divided, and become partners in their unhappy discords; and, especially while they were young, might withdraw their affection from the man she loved more dearly than herself, and who, notwithstanding his ill conduct, had a right to their dutiful obedience. Had this been the case, it is easy to see the fatal consequences that would undoubtedly have followed, not the least of which would have been a want of education, a disregard of all instruction, and their being deprived of those just principles of virtue and honour, which raise the man above the brute, and render him worthy of the character of a rational and social being: for they would probably have disregarded the advice of those whose quarrels gave them perpetual uneasiness. But this amiable lady's prudence is visible in nothing more than in concealing the follies of her husband, which she does with as much care as if they were more immediately her own. She endeavours to hide even his least foibles, not only from her children, but from all the world. And I think I may safely affirm, that no one ever heard her say an unkind or disrespectful word of him.

What an admirable character, Madam, replied I, have you given us of this charming lady! How happy

would most women find themselves, if they were as tender of their husbands reputations! With what pain have I heard a lady, otherwise of good sense, expatiate for an hour together on the little trifling domestick quarrels which have happened between herself and her consort! How frequently do we hear married women dwell with a malicious satisfaction upon those vices, which prudence alone, without the least degree of love, ought to teach them to conceal! For a woman always stands in some degree in the same light with her husband; and she cannot certainly make him appear infamous, without throwing a load of disgrace upon herself; for people will always be ready to imagine, that she herself must be guilty of some imprudence, which she dare not discover, that gave rise to the vices and injuries she so warmly exclaims against.

You are much in the right, my dear, returned my aunt; and I am very glad to hear you have such just sentiments, since I hope they will influence your own conduct, if ever you should be in circumstances to require it.

This conversation, which was drawn out to a considerable length, took up our time till we arrived at my aunt's. But I must not omit one particular, which indeed is too agreeable for me to conceal; which was, that Lucius and his sister had each of them a fortune of five thousand pounds left them by a relation, who died a few months ago.

You see, Madam, with what confidence I lay open the disadvantageous circumstances of a family in whose happiness I interest myself; and can I give you a more convincing proof of the sincerity of my friendship? My father, notwithstanding his natural generosity, and tenderness for me, will never, I am afraid, consent to my entering into an alliance so extremely beneath what my fortune may seem to require. I tremble at the thought of disoblighing him; and am resolved, whatever it cost me, to conform myself to his will. However, I may be mistaken. It is possible that a prospect of my happiness may outweigh all consideration of meaner interests and advantages.

Forgive me now, if you can, for troubling you with these melancholy thoughts, which I endeavour in vain to suppress. While this is the case, you must

must not wonder at my dulness, which, in my opinion, is less pardonable than impertinence, since the one may possibly make you smile at least, while the other can have no better effect than to give you the vapours, which if you can escape after reading this heavy epistle, I shall not despair of seeing you in my condition; that is, frequently amusing yourself with a dull walk, amidst dull trees, dull fields, and talking to your duller self. But Heaven preserve you from such a change: and may you ever think me, as I really am, in spite of love, vapours, and melancholy,

Your sincere FRIEND.

The moment I had written the first letter of that dear expressive word *friend*, by which I would always have you understand, whenever I make use of it, a thousand nameless ideas of affection, sympathy, and whatever you can imagine else most agreeable and endearing; I say, at the very instant as I was concluding my letter, I heard Amelia enter my room; when, turning my head, she told me, with a smile, that the amiable Marilla was just come to pay us a visit: then immediately forgetting what I was about, I arose with a heart full of joy, threw down my pen, and ran to embrace the sister of my dear—no, that is too fond; agreeable, I should say—well, then, of my agreeable Lucius. We had a great deal of chat upon a-bundance of entertaining topics; while my desire of engaging the friendship of this lady made me discover an unusual gaiety; or rather, the friendship I had already conceived for her threw off all my restraint, and made me treat her with the same open satisfaction as if I had been convinced that she had already entertained the same friendship for me; so that in a little time we grew as intimate as if our acquaintance had been of long standing. No reserve, no diffidence, no restraint, subsisted between us; all our behaviour was frankness, vivacity, and the utmost extent of sprightly freedom. You yourself, my dear Charlotte, (forgive me saying so) had you unexpectedly come to see me, could hardly have made a greater change in the situation of my mind. How swift a progress does friendship make, when a person begins with such dispositions! A desire of being agreeable is the readiest way of making ourselves so.

My aunt had not only invited this lady to see us at our last visit, but hearing me express an extreme desire of enjoying that satisfaction at our return, sent the next day a letter to her mamma, unknown to me, to desire her to permit her to stay a day or two at our house: a favour that I could not help being highly sensible of, and from which you may judge of the pains she takes to make my stay in the country agreeable to me.

My new companion and I, not contented with engrossing almost all the conversation to ourselves, resolved to take a little turn in the fields, to indulge our young friendship with discoursing on some subjects not proper for a mixed company; and therefore, finding an opportunity of leaving our companions, we slipped into the garden, and from thence went into a retired walk, where we might lay open our hearts without the least restraint. A gentle breeze that whispered among the trees, the fragrance of the air, and the awful silence of the evening, contributed to soften my mind, and charm my senses. The

—Twilight grey

Had in her solemn livery all things clad;

—While the moon,

Rising in clouded majesty—

Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

MILTON.

We walked slowly on, at first discoursing upon indifferent subjects, till the amiable Marilla mentioned her brother, and told me he desired her to present his humble respects to me. This gave me an opportunity of asking how he did, and happily introduced a conversation more interesting than can well be conceived. 'I fancy, Miss,' said I, 'you must be very happy in the friendship and tenderness of this gentleman: he seems possessed of extraordinary merit.'—'Ah, Madam,' returned she, 'I am more happy than can be imagined. He has an extreme affection for me; and there subsists such a harmony between us, as is very rarely seen in such near relations. It is his chief study to improve my mind; and he has taken inconceivable pains in giving me those just principles of virtue, which, I hope, will always influence my conduct. I find in him not only a brother, but a sincere and affectionate friend. We have but one common interest.'

interest. He trusts me with the secrets of his heart; and, in short, we are so closely united, that were I unhappy, he would feel as much for me as perhaps I should for myself.—Well, my dear,” replied I, (endeavouring still to discover whether she was acquainted with his passion) “I could almost envy you the pleasure of enjoying these dear social delights. I never knew what it was to have a brother; and, if I had, I might have been a stranger to your happiness. There are very few such brothers and sisters as you.” Here I pressed her hand with much affection, charmed with the engaging idea she had given me of her own felicity. She was some minutes before she replied, and perhaps was at a loss for an answer; however, at last, recovering herself—“Dear Miss,” said she, “I assure you it is an addition to my happiness, to find that you entertain such favourable sentiments of us. Lucius would be transported with joy, if he could have heard from your lips that he has any share in your esteem. It is true; he has some merit, a great deal more than I can boast of, since I owe great part of mine to him; yet you are pleased to honour me with your friendship, while he——” She here appeared pretty much confused; and, as if at a loss how to proceed, stopped and stood silent: but at last, seeming to recollect herself, instead of going on, she resumed—“Had he a fortune equal to yours, he would perhaps be better able to tell you himself those tender sentiments which swell his heart.”—“Has Lucius, then,” replied I with an innocent tone, and an air of astonishment, “any sentiments which he is afraid to discover to me? I can scarcely believe it, though you yourself are pleased to tell me so. However, I have so just an opinion of his virtue and fine sense, that I hardly think him capable of saying any thing disagreeable.”—“And may I tell him this?” replied Marilla, in a kind of extasy. “Why not?” returned I; “it would be a great misfortune, if we were never to be honoured with any company but such as were upon a level with us with respect to fortune. A pride of this kind would be the greatest curse, since there are innumerable blessings in life infinitely more valuable than all the advantages that can procure us.

“The charms of a virtuous and upright mind are internal; they constitute a real merit, and reflect a glory upon the possessor; a glory, in comparison of which all other advantages are superficial and trifling.”

We were here interrupted by Amelia, who saw us go into the garden, and perceiving us at some distance, came running to rejoin us. With her we presently returned home: and Marilla leaving us the next day, I have nothing farther to add, than that I am, dear Madam, yours most affectionately,

FELICIA.

LETTER VI.

DEAR CHARLOTTE,

NOTWITHSTANDING the friendly congratulations you give me upon the late acquisition of fortune I received by the death of my uncle, I can assure you, with the utmost sincerity, that it gives me little or no pleasure. This, I believe, will surprize you, since, as you justly observe, I cannot be supposed to grieve for the loss of a gentleman I have never seen, and who consequently cannot have endeared himself to me by any of those proofs of affection we may receive from persons we frequently converse with: nor would I have you believe that I am such a perfect Stoick as to be absolutely insensible of the grandeur, the riches, and honours, of life. These, it must be confessed, have seducing charms, and are apt to intoxicate our minds with the most pleasing prospects of future bliss: they naturally swell the imagination with high-wrought scenes of delight; nor can one of my age receive them without feeling some engaging ideas of that homage, that respectful awe, which so agreeably flatters our vanity. That darling foible of youth, Gold, whose sovereign charms are universally felt, attracts every heart; all are delighted with the advantages it procures. The grave philosopher too often sacrifices at this shrine; and the more devout priest, who with such eloquence harangues on Sundays upon the contempt of riches, and with such force of expression, exhorts us to condemn the transitory enjoyments of life, those vanities, those bagbles, those unsatisfying and pestilential goods, in spite of all his opprobrious epithets, is still captivated

by this magick; and, perhaps, there are few among them that would look with such insensibility on the acquisition of ten thousand pounds as I do.

After this long preamble, you possibly begin to wonder what I would be at; and are ready perhaps to imagine that I am either very vain, or else that, pleased too much with the solitude of a country-life, I am become a sort of female hermit. But neither of these is the case.

I have not yet excluded all thoughts of making a gay appearance in life; nor do I find any charms in such a retirement as would deprive me of an opportunity of being serviceable to my fellow-creatures, and enjoying those social pleasures, which are some of the greatest sweeteners of life. But to be sincere; this long piece of slander, which may at first sight appear so injurious to the honour of philosophers and priests, (I beg the clergy's pardon, priests and philosophers I should say, since the sacred character of the gown-men demands that I should give them the preference) this piece of slander, I say, was only introduced to raise your curiosity.

Ah! my Lucius, can I taste the sweets of a fortune, which will doubtless be a bar to my happiness, and render it impossible for me to be thine! This is a reflection which damps all my joy. Alas! how weak is ambition, when compared to love!

The day after Marilla left me, I had the pleasure of seeing her brother. He had an air of unusual satisfaction in his look; and perhaps encouraged by the repetition she had doubtless made him of that conversation I related in my last, in which I so freely confessed my regard for him, he spoke, methought, with less diffidence; his behaviour was more polite; his manner less constrained; while a thousand tender nameless graces, which I had never discovered before, rendered him still dearer to my heart. I now felt myself insensibly awed by his presence; and in proportion as he became more unconstrained, I grew more thoughtful. I would gladly have resumed my usual gaiety, but it was impossible; the company of my aunt and cousins become burthenome, and I began to fear their discovering in my eyes that flow of tender friendship, that dear transporting extasy, which swelled my breast. To recover myself from this sweet disorder, I hastily arose, and

retired into the garden, where I gave a loose to reflection without fear of being observed. I then began to revolve in my mind the danger of indulging a passion which would probably prove fatal to my repose, since I could not have the least prospect of it's ever being countenanced by my father's approbation. I therefore blamed myself; and, after a long debate, resolved to use all my endeavours to conquer my growing weakness: but I had hardly formed this resolution when I saw Lucius enter the garden. I was then sitting in an arbour covered with woodbines, whose flowers embalmed the whispering breezes with a pleasing fragrance. He saw me, and immediately approaching with an air of respect, asked me if his company would not be a disagreeable interrupting of my solitude? I replied, that as my thoughts were only engaged on trifles, it would be no pain to me to place them upon more agreeable subjects. 'But why, Sir,' added I, smiling, 'have you left the ladies?'—'I am obliged to return home,' said he; 'and your aunt having this minute received a letter, I took the opportunity, while she was reading it, of coming to take leave of you.'

I had now entirely forgotten the resolution I had just taken to arm my heart with insensibility; and filled with a soft and pleasing surprize at the unexpected company of my lover, even a letter from London could not awaken the least curiosity, though I did not doubt it's coming from my father. Lucius now sat down by me upon a bank of camomile which almost surrounded the arbour, when I expected every moment to hear him enter upon the most delightful subject, love; but though he was more assured than ever I had seen him, the restraints of a modest diffidence still tied his tongue, and made him for some time preserve a silence which I did not care to interrupt. He opened his lips several times, but, quivering with fear, they instantly closed without uttering a syllable; but at last seeming to collect all his fortitude—'Forgive me, Miss,' said he, giving me a look inexpressibly tender; 'forgive a behaviour, which doubtless makes me appear extremely ridiculous; but it is impossible to—' Here he cast down his eyes, with a sigh; while a flood of soft and melting ideas seemed to choke up his voice; but at length,

length, finding I waited to hear him conclude, he lifted up his head, when I saw his face covered with a deep blush, while every feature was expressive of the most violent emotions. 'How impossible is it, dear Madam,' resumed he, with a faltering voice, 'to give utterance to a passion too tender to be described—and too—too presumptuous to be forgiven,' added he, with a look and tone that spoke the deepest despair.

During this speech, which, short as it was, took up a considerable time, I thought I felt all the throbbings of his heart. I seemed conscious of all that dread, that love, and all those terrible apprehensions, which bewildered his thoughts in a maze of confusion, and made him tremble at a discovery which, though he resolved to make, he dreaded the effects it might produce. But notwithstanding this sympathick penetration, and all the disturbance it had a natural tendency to create, the very cause of my pain was the source of the tenderest and most exquisite pleasure, the softest and most soothing delight. As soon as he concluded, he waited for my reply in a kind of agonizing suspense; but though I was a moment at a loss how to return an answer, I suffered my eyes to express a pity and compassion capable of dispersing his most alarming fears, had he dared to have lifted up his to observe them. But when I spoke, a glance immediately met mine, which instantly brightening, seemed to discover my meaning before I could give it utterance. 'I assure you, Sir,' said I in a mild tone, 'that I am not at all disposed to increase your confusion by ridiculing the painful disorder which has accompanied this too tender declaration. I am sensible of your merit, and don't think you capable of an attempt to deceive me. Believe me, Sir, I look upon you as my friend, and therefore entreat you to reflect a little upon the obstacles that will inevitably oppose your wishes. However, I freely confess, if that will give you any satisfaction, that were I at my own disposal, you would perhaps have no reason to complain of my severity.'

You cannot conceive, my dear Charlotte, what a sudden change this obliging reply made upon the countenance and behaviour of my lover. You are now ready to imagine that I shall describe him throwing himself at my feet, while

with a flow of rapture he admires my superlative goodness, blending his praises with two or three hundred adorables, transcendent excellencies, infinite perfections, incomparable creatures, and abundance of other fine things of the same strain. But if these are your thoughts, you are extremely mistaken; for I did not hear him utter the least syllable of this sublime nonsense. He is too good a Christian to deify his mistress, and has too good an opinion of me to think I should be pleased with such senseless homage. In short, in spite of his humility, his love was incapable of blinding him so far as to make him forget that I was a very woman still, a being of the same species with himself; and therefore he neither debased himself, nor attempted to please me with flattering praises.

After all, I am terribly afraid that I shall be unable to give you any tolerable idea of the conclusion of this affecting scene. The dreadful agitations, which were before so visible in every feature of his face, were now instantly changed to those of joy; a thick cloud, that covered his eyes, in a moment dispersed; they sparkled with unusual brightness; while gratitude and love, surprize and extasy, appeared in swift succession on his countenance, and painted there all the emotions of his heart. As despair had before kept him silent, the contrary passion had now the same effect; but, as soon as he recovered his voice, giving me a look of tender surprize and delight—'O my Felicia!' cried he, in a most moving tone; and then, after a pause of half a minute—'O my dear Felicia, have I not offended you? Am I so happy, so exquisitely happy, as to have obtained your esteem?'—'Yes, Sir,' returned I, with an affected sprightliness, and endeavouring at the same time to conceal the tenderness of my looks by holding down my head, 'I have a very great esteem for you, but not a greater than I am persuaded you will always deserve. But come,' added I with a sigh, which for my life I could not conceal, 'let us go to my aunt; this conversation grows too tender.'

Here I arose without waiting for an answer, while he followed me, at the same time begging my pardon, and saying he had forgot to tell me, that my aunt, seeing him go into the garden, desired him to let me know that she had something

something to say to me, which she fancied would not be disagreeable. This news put me in mind of the letter he had mentioned; and therefore fearing she might think me long, and perhaps form some suspicion at seeing us together, I desired him to make haste before, and tell her I was coming: but I had no sooner made this request, than I stumbled at the handle of a roller which reached to the border of the path; when seizing my hand to help me, (though I was in no danger of a fall) he squeezed it with an air of tenderness; and, without seeming to know what he did, suddenly pressed it to his bosom, giving me a look at the same time so inexpressibly soft and moving, that I could not help being extremely affected by it: and indeed my cheeks were immediately covered with a blush; nor could I forbear giving a sigh, though I endeavoured all along to conceal these proofs of my sensibility. But, the moment he took my hand from his breast, confounded at this sudden impulse of passion, which I believe would not permit him to think of what he did, he gave me a look which seemed to ask forgiveness, and, trembling, held my fingers with a fearful, easy timidity; but finding I seemed not to observe him, and that I discovered no marks of resentment, joy again appeared in his looks, and he conducted me in the same manner to the house, with an air of ecstasy and delight. Nor, indeed, was I less happy than he: I easily comprehended the source of every pleasing impulse; and could with the same satisfaction have pressed his hand too, had not the laws of prudence and modest reserve forbid it.

It is well the prude I mentioned to you in one of my former letters is not to see this, for these last lines would have made her lose all her patience: but surely it can be no crime to act from nature, when virtue is our rule; and I am sure it is none frankly to confess the innocent transports of our hearts to a friend. But if these natural sensations were indeed criminal, they soon suffered a shock that gave me no little pain.

We entered the house with our minds filled with all the soothing ideas that could flow from a concurrence of the most delightful thoughts, when he let go my hand, and walked in before me; but my aunt no sooner saw me, than she cried out, with an air that discovered her own

satisfaction, and, at the same time, let me see that she was pleased at thinking it in her power to contribute to mine—

'Come, my dear,' said she, 'I wish you joy.' Here Amelia and Polly paid me the same compliment, and, at the same instant, came running, in a friendly transport, to embrace me; when, at last, putting an end to their caresses, filled with an eager curiosity—'Why do you wish me joy, Madam?' cried I to my aunt; 'pray explain yourself; have you a letter from London?'—'Yes, child,' returned she, in an ecstasy; 'and your father tells me, that your uncle in the East-Indies has left you no less a sum than ten thousand pounds. How!' added she, 'are you not pleased with the news! Are there no charms in being a rich heiress! What an extravagant fortune are you like to have!' I now put on a forced smile, to prevent my giving her the mortification of seeing how boldly I received what she with reason imagined such a subject of joy. And indeed, I could not have behaved otherwise without betraying the dearest secrets of my heart. At the mention of ten thousand pounds, I had been unable to disguise that thoughtfulness which was suddenly spread over my face—a painful thoughtfulness, that was caused by the reflection, had it but been Lucius that he had bestowed it upon, O then I might have had a better prospect of being happy! Can I receive any satisfaction from a circumstance that widens still farther the distance between him and me? Here casting my eyes upon him, I found still greater reason to be filled with dislike at this painful, splendid acquisition. He stood with his face towards me, leaning upon the back of a chair; his eyes were cast down with a dejected confusion; then lifting them up to the ceiling with an air of despair, I perceived his face pale, a tear rolling down his cheeks, which he endeavoured to conceal, by hastily pulling out his handkerchief, and walking to the door; when, having staid there a minute to recover himself, he suddenly took leave to return home.

What various, what strong, what cruel emotions was I now obliged to conceal! But this was not all, I was constrained to assume a gay appearance. Torturing deceit! I never felt a more painful situation, nor ever sure was an innocent disguise accompanied with such cruel

cruel anguish. I made these observations on Lucius's behaviour, while I seemed to be reading the letter which my aunt had given me; and though I began it again as soon as he left us, I read it over without knowing a word it contained, except my being assured that what my aunt had told was but too true.

You now see, my dear, what reason I have to be dissatisfied with what you have esteemed a subject of joy. Vain are all the prospects of advantage we fondly flatter ourselves with from the acquisition of wealth, the alluring prospects of gay magnificence, the splendid appearances of ostentatious grandeur, while a thousand thwarting and controuling accidents can damp our highest and most raised expectations, and change the very objects of our delight into the most painful disquiets, the bitterest sources of discontent and trouble. But I find I am running on in a reflection, which, if I was to indulge it, might carry me to a tedious length; I shall therefore break off in time, and conclude with desiring you, Madam, to form an idea, if you can, of that affection with which I subscribe myself, your sincerest friend,

FELICIA.

LETTER VII.

DEAR MADAM,

THE interest you take in the unhappy situation of Lucius's affairs, and your obliging concern for the opposition you fear my father will make to my happiness, are such endearing proofs of your friendship, that I could not read your last letter without feeling my breast glow with the most charming mixture of delight and affection: and indeed what higher satisfaction can we feel than that which naturally springs from the approbation of a friend, in an affair so tender, and so peculiarly interesting as that on which we fancy all our happiness is founded! The very passion you approve, is obliged to return the obligation; and it does so in the most effectual manner, by transferring some of its tender feelings to the person who thus sympathizes in its dearest sensations.

In spite of the improbability of my father's ever being brought to approve our mutual affection, I could not think of losing Lucius, and banishing

all thoughts of our future felicity, without a very painful affliction. I was willing to see him still, though I ought rather to have avoided his sight as much as possible, since his company could be of no other service, than to strengthen a passion too deeply rooted in my heart. The admonitions of reason were of little effect; I was not disposed to listen to them: a more prevailing impulse made me long to see him; and not hearing from him for four tedious days, I wished with the greatest ardour for an opportunity of letting him know, that the new addition to my fortune had not made me less worthy of his esteem. This I fancied I ought to do in justice to myself, and formed abundance of plausible reasons, which made it appear absolutely necessary that I should thus set my own character in a true light.

'After the hopes I have already given him,' said I to myself, 'can I suffer him to continue in an error so injurious to my tenderness, and even to my reputation too, as to think me of a soul so sordid, as to be puffed up with the advantages of superior wealth; to think I can retract the encouragement I have given him, and to believe that, elated with pride, I can now regard him with an air of superiority and contempt? No, I can't bear that my dear Lucius should entertain an opinion of me which I so little deserve; he shall know that, if we must be separated, it is not my choice, but a cruel force, that renders it necessary. He shall know that I am still the same, that I am still as sensible of his merit as ever; and that, were I at my own disposal, not all the riches of the universe could bribe me to entertain a thought fatal to his peace and happiness. But how,' said I, recollecting myself, 'shall I have an opportunity of undeceiving him? Does he not deprive me of the power of doing myself justice? His fears prevent my giving him the satisfaction of making him those assurances, which, if I may judge of his tenderness by my own, would be highly agreeable to him. What then shall I do? Shall I write? No, I can never consent to that; it would be too forward, and discover too great a fondness, for me to make the first advances. Suppose I write to Marilla, and let her know the struggle of contending passions, which fill my mind with such a multitude

• titude of various solitudes, and ten-
 • der perplexities. Would not that be
 • the same as writing to him, since she
 • would doubtless shew him her letter?
 • But suppose I desire her to keep it a
 • secret, what then will he be the better
 • for it? he will still be as ignorant of
 • my thoughts as ever. Well, then, it will
 • be to no purpose to write at all. Here
 I fixed, and resolved to leave him ig-
 norant of all that I desired he should
 know, till a favourable opportunity
 offered, that would permit me to dis-
 cover my sentiments in a less excep-
 tionable manner; and I did not doubt
 but my aunt's friendship for him
 would soon lay before me an occasion
 of doing it, since she was too much
 pleased with his company and Maril-
 la's, to dispense with their frequently
 giving her the satisfaction of enjoy-
 ing their conversation.

These reflections I made in my cham-
 ber; when having at last resolved to arm
 myself with patience, I went down, and
 conversed with Amelia for some minutes;
 but finding a tender melancholy grew
 upon my spirits, I sought for an op-
 portunity of indulging it. And indeed,
 when we are in this disposition, the com-
 pany of the most agreeable friends be-
 comes burthenome: I therefore gave
 her the slip, and retired into the fields, to
 indulge at large the soothing softness of
 my own ideas.

You smile, my dear Charlotte, at feel-
 ing me become such an unsocial crea-
 ture, as to prefer my own company to
 that of a friend. What a strange thing
 is love! But though I am grown infinitely
 fond of talking to myself, and walking
 under the shady covert of oaks and elms,
 yet I am not so perfect a lover as to hold
 a discourse with these inanimate beings;
 nor have I ever had the least inclination
 to carve the name of Lucius upon their
 barks. I am not yet arrived to that de-
 gree of madness; nor indeed have I ob-
 served, in any of my rambles, any such
 lasting marks of my lover's extrava-
 gance.

I had not long enjoyed my retirement,
 when I saw a man crossing the neigh-
 bouring fields with precipitation; he at
 last came up to me, and with abun-
 dant awkward scrapes, after having
 asked my name, gave me a letter, and
 immediately retired. As soon as he was
 gone, I cast my eyes around, to see if
 any body observed me; and, full of a

curiosity which would not suffer me to
 stay till I got to my chamber, seated
 myself upon a bank of turf at the foot
 of a shady tree which sufficiently con-
 cealed me, when hastily breaking open
 the letter, I had the satisfaction of see-
 ing that it came from my dear Lucius.
 How tender and generous were his senti-
 ments! how affectionate!—But the con-
 fidence which subsists between us, gives
 you a right to see the letter itself. I will
 therefore transcribe it; and I am sure, if
 you have the least idea of my affection
 for this amiable youth, you will not be
 surprized, if I declare that I was charmed
 with it. But, without any farther pre-
 amble, I found it as follows—

• MADAM,

• IT is with the utmost confusion that
 • I reflect upon your being a wit-
 • ness of the disorder I discovered at your
 • aunt's, at what ought rather to be a
 • subject of joy. My hand trembles
 • while I attempt to apologize for my
 • behaviour. What words can I make
 • use of to discover the sincerity, the
 • ardour, the tender delicacy of my
 • passion, when I have given you such
 • reason to believe that it is the basest,
 • the most mean, and selfish? when I
 • have given you such cause to think,
 • that I have lost in myself, in the mean
 • consideration of my own happiness,
 • the tender regard which I ought to
 • have for yours? But, O consider the
 • towering hopes to which you had rais-
 • ed me! Consider the charming, the
 • extatic flood of joy, which in a full
 • tide of transporting rapture raised me
 • above myself, and seemed to promise a
 • felicity vastly beyond what my vainest
 • thoughts could have aspired to! Think
 • but of the delight that must swell my
 • heart, at being raised from the most
 • gloomy despair of timorous love, to
 • the unexpected extasy of seeing my
 • fears vanish; of experiencing all the
 • rapturous sweets of the most charming
 • passion; all the joy that could flow
 • from the most exquisite goodness, the
 • most endearing condescension: and
 • then, if it be possible, do but think of
 • what I must feel, at finding, in one
 • moment, my high-wrought felicity
 • overturned, and myself thrown down
 • from the eminence of my aspiring
 • joys!

• Forgive, dear Madam, my endea-
 • vouring thus to extenuate a behaviour,
 • which

' which has discovered too great a regard for my happiness, too little for yours. If it has appeared ungenerous and mercenary, nothing but surprize can excuse it, and nothing but surprize could make me in this case guilty of a conduct that makes it necessary for me to beg pardon. I have now conquered myself, and sincerely congratulate you with the rest of your friends; while, with a heart overflowing with your felicity, I forget my own miseries. But why do I mention misery? I shall have none while you are blessed: your happiness shall be mine too. All my satisfaction and delight shall spring from the pleasing contemplation of yours. What a delightful source of the noblest joy! I lose the too presumptuous title of your lover in that of your friend; and may I in that character have the sweet, the dear satisfaction, of seeing you as lastingly happy as my fondest wishes would make you! May your virtue, with all those numberless, those nameless graces, which make even that and religion appear with diviner charms, give you all those pure and noble delights, which it is not in the power of wealth to bestow! and may both together render you the happiest of mortals!

' But whither would my tender imagination carry me? I could dwell for ever on this delightful subject. My heart, warmed with your dear idea, would endeavour to make you sensible of what it feels for you. But how vast a disproportion is there between the swell of melting thought and the flatness of words! they were formed to convey mere vulgar conceptions, or, at most, emotions less strong and affecting: I therefore want a thousand nameless epithets to express the force of my friendship, the delightful impulses of my soul. But think not, dear Madam, that I have only gained a victory over a weak and feeble passion. Did you know with what a vast excess I have loved, you might perhaps form some idea of that painful struggle it has cost me to conquer the most ardent affection, and reduce it to the disinterested standard of that more sober one which becomes a friend. But I beg pardon for my impertinence, which I am afraid has both tired and

' offended you; and therefore beg leave to subscribe myself, Madam, your sincerest, and most devoted friend,
' LUCIUS.'

As soon as I had run over the above letter, a sudden impulse of tenderness made me press it to my lips with a most pleasing extasy.—Nay, you may laugh as much as you please; I kissed, I say, the dear character with a transport of delight; kissed the senseless paper; and having pressed it to my heart, and secured it in that situation, I arose and hastened to my chamber, in order to peruse it more at my leisure. I there read it over several times, but could not help reflecting how much pleasure I lost by that painful awe, which prevented his uttering the melting softness of his heart when in my presence. With what extasy should I have heard such tender things from his lips, especially when assisted with the moving tone of his voice, and the more elegant language of his expressive countenance! I should then have been all rapture. However, I at last resolved to write an answer; when, after having blotted and scrawled over about half a dozen sheets of paper without being able to please myself, I was obliged to lay aside my design.

I could not divest myself of that softness which his epistle had inspired me with; all my efforts to this purpose proved ineffectual. A pleasing languor, which hung upon my spirits, gave me such a sweet lethargy of thought, as rendered it impossible for me to express any other sentiments than those of my heart; and they were indeed too tender to be communicated, especially to a lover who wanted my father's approbation to give a sanction to his passion. The next morning, however, I was more composed; and therefore wrote the following letter, which I have not yet had an opportunity of sending to him.

' POOR LUCIUS!

' WERE I disposed to triumph over the weakness of a lover, who in humble strains of soft complaint lays himself at my mercy, I should perhaps find subject enough in your epistle to railly your passion, as well as your pretended victory over it. But I have at present no inclination to indulge such a savage gaiety, since it

D

' would

‘ would probably give you pain. The flow
 ‘ of tender sentiments, the delicacy of
 ‘ passion, which makes you desire that
 ‘ I should still preserve my esteem for
 ‘ you, and your disinterested and warm
 ‘ concern for my happiness, are so many
 ‘ proofs of your generosity and intrinsic
 ‘ merit, that I cannot help feeling a very
 ‘ sensible pleasure every time I reflect
 ‘ upon them. Your confusion at my
 ‘ good fortune, which I confess I took
 ‘ particular notice of, was too natural
 ‘ for me to be very much offended at it;
 ‘ and indeed, I have rather pitied than
 ‘ blamed your distress. The advantages
 ‘ we receive from wealth, are as super-
 ‘ ficial, I believe, as any we enjoy; and
 ‘ while they deprive us of that sincerity
 ‘ and unreserved freedom, that open-
 ‘ ness of behaviour, which persons in
 ‘ inferior circumstances receive from
 ‘ their friends, they strip us of the most
 ‘ engaging sweets of life; blessings,
 ‘ which not all the luxury of incumber-
 ‘ ing magnificence and studied splendor,
 ‘ not all the homage of empty ceremony
 ‘ and servile submission, can atone for
 ‘ the want of. You see, Sir, I can mor-
 ‘ alize like any philosopher, and you
 ‘ may possibly flatter yourself that you
 ‘ have taught me this doctrine. Do so
 ‘ if you please. I own my regard for
 ‘ you; and, however romantick the Pla-
 ‘ tonick friendship you propose may ap-
 ‘ pear, I readily accept of it, since that
 ‘ is all that either you or I ought to hope
 ‘ for. With my sincere respect to my
 ‘ good friend, your sister, I am, Sir,
 ‘ yours, &c.

‘ FELICIA.’

How many tender and affecting sen-
 timents was I here obliged to suppress!
 I was afraid of discovering the secrets of
 my heart, though he would doubtless
 be transported to find that I was as ca-
 pable of love as himself, and that he had
 inspired me with all that softness that
 could flow from the most passionate af-
 fection. But to you I have discovered
 all my weakness, and depend upon your
 friendship and good nature to keep it an
 inviolable secret, especially from my fa-
 ther, whose goodness I am resolved never
 to abuse by the least act of disobedience.
 I am, dear Charlotte, in spite of love,
 or any other rival passion, most sin-
 cerely yours,

FELICIA.

LETTER VIII.

MADAM,

THE satisfaction you discovered, at
 the little conversation-piece I gave
 you some account of, in one of my for-
 mer letters, makes me glad of an op-
 portunity to vary my subject, and leave
 the tender tale of love for a theme which
 even one of your gay disposition will,
 I am sure, think equally entertaining
 and instructive.

The day after I sent you my last, we
 had the pleasure of receiving a visit from
 Mr. Stevens, the facetious old gentle-
 man whose character you are pretty well
 acquainted with. The afternoon was
 spent very agreeably; but before he took
 leave, my aunt, who still takes all
 imaginable pains to contribute to my sa-
 tisfaction, by diversifying my amuse-
 ments, proposed our making a short
 excursion the next day to a nobleman's
 seat at no great distance from us. ‘ I
 ‘ have observed,’ said she, smiling,
 ‘ that my niece appears very much de-
 ‘ lighted with this part of the country;
 ‘ she seems fond of agreeable landscapes;
 ‘ and my desire of retaining her here as
 ‘ long as possible, makes me willing to
 ‘ gratify this taste, by shewing her such
 ‘ as I don't doubt but she will think
 ‘ both surprizing and agreeable. Will
 ‘ you, Sir, contribute to her satisfaction
 ‘ and ours, by giving us your company
 ‘ to-morrow? We are apt to be weary in
 ‘ the company of those we daily converse
 ‘ with; but a friend of your facetious turn
 ‘ will enliven our conversation, and find us
 ‘ constant matter for exercising our wit,
 ‘ and rendering us even more agreeable
 ‘ to ourselves.’ Mr. Stevens replied to
 this compliment in a very handsome
 manner; and at the same time added
 greatly to the pleasure I had in prospect,
 by saying, that if it would not be dis-
 agreeable, he would increase our num-
 ber, by bringing Lucius, and another
 friend with him, whose company he fan-
 cied would make our satisfaction com-
 plete: when my aunt replied for us
 all, that we gladly accepted his offer, and
 that she was sure the gentleman's being
 his friend would be a sufficient recom-
 mendation to us.

The next day before dinner we had
 the pleasure of seeing our old friend re-
 turn, accompanied by a young clergy-
 man his relation, who had just finished
 his

his studies at Cambridge, and the engaging Lucius. Our repast was short; and that being over, we set out in two coaches, Mr. Stevens's, and my aunt's. But I shall not attempt to give a particular description of all the new and uncommon prospects which discover themselves in this delightful part of the country, where nature with a liberal hand pours out her favours, and with a profusion of frolick bounty, spreads a wildness equally extravagant and pleasing. I pass over the beautiful landscapes we drove through in this agreeable tour, for no other reason than because the view I had of them was too sudden to render me capable of describing them; besides, were it possible for me to do it to advantage, their being so perfectly extraordinary might reflect a little upon my veracity, and make you imagine that my descriptions were too uncommon to have any real existence in nature.

Are you not surprized now, my dear Charlotte, that I can all this while forbear speaking of my dear Lucius, since there is certainly a very exquisite pleasure in talking of the man we love! But the reason of my not mentioning him was, that as he went in the other coach, he could only give me now and then a glance, which seemed to express a troublesome kind of diffidence and suspense, which I fancied arose from his longing to know what reception I gave his letter, and a fear lest he had inserted any thing in it that had offended me. At last, however, arriving at the park of my Lord M***, we by common consent agreed to walk to the house. As soon as I stepped out of the coach, I could not help being extremely delighted with the agreeable scene which lay before us, and which I cannot for my life help giving you some description of. Here the intermixture of dusky groves, and light-some plains; of woods impervious to the rays of the sun, which now spread his cheering beams around us, and the agreeable openings which discovered the bounding deer flying to the covert of the shady thicket; presented a landscape the most pleasingly rural, and worthy the attention of the most curious observer; while we found ourselves at the entrance of a grand walk, which extending to a prodigious length, grew insensibly narrower, till closing in perspective, the vista seemed lost in the grove, out of which arose, as if by enchantment, several lofty stone

turrets, which I afterwards found were part of a magnificent Gothick edifice, built in a most extraordinary taste. In short, the whole scene, notwithstanding it's being very delightful, had such a romantick appearance, that for some minutes I could think of nothing but castles and embowering shades, arising spontaneously to the charms of musick; of the work of fairies, and the power of necromancy.

The company was no sooner joined, than, after some compliments from the gentlemen in the other coach, and their desiring to know my opinion of the tour we had taken, we fell insensibly into moralizing on the various beauties of nature, and comparing the natural connection there is between the exterior arrangements of bodies, which are formed to delight our senses, and the proportions of internal beauty, the propriety of action, and the native amiableness of an honest, generous, and upright mind. That as nature had carefully formed the various senses with different powers, adapted to convey delight to the soul, from the multitude of outward beings which surround us; so she had been no less careful in forming the mind with tastes and passions for directing it's pursuit to objects capable of raising it to the sublimest pleasures; while these pleasures not only result from it's purity, but are the very means of exalting it to still higher degrees of perfection and happiness. 'What a delightful sensation does this azure dome give the eye!' said Lucius, with an air extremely graceful: 'Could the earth be covered with a more beautiful cieling, or a finer copy? What a pleasing verdure clothes the ground, while it meets the limits of the high arch of heaven with intermingling shades! a beautiful carpet for man and beast! But, all lovely as this scene appears, how much does it fall short of the nobler landscape of the mind! The honest man, whenever he pleases to review his actions, and contemplate the situation of his heart, perceives a pleasing extasy arising from every instance of his integrity. He sees a symmetry even more transportingly beautiful than this of nature; a proportion and arrangement of passions incomparably more pleasing than all the various dispositions of light and shade, of woods and pasture, of murmuring springs and falling torrents.

How vast the difference between the most lovely scenes which can arise from the modifications of matter in it's most compleat perfection, between the tones of the most melting and harmonious accents, and the nicer and more delicate sensations of an approving conscience! An engaging instance of the divine wisdom and benevolence, in constituting the very means of advancing the happiness of others the means of procuring the sublimest pleasures to ourselves! — 'Very true,' rejoined the clergyman with a smile; 'but if we compare the divine congratulations of reason, the tranquil sweetness and internal satisfaction of the benevolent man, the patriot, the friend of mankind, with the sordid pleasure of the successfully ambitious, the tricking knave, the abandoned debauchée; how vast, how immense a disproportion shall we find in the nature of their enjoyments! enjoyments as widely distant as the high-wrought pleasures of a God, and the low gratifications of the most grovelling animal.' — 'Well, but, gentlemen,' replied my aunt, laughing, and pulling the clergyman by the sleeve, 'methinks you might be so polite, notwithstanding the rapture which seems to carry you out of yourselves, to allow us a small share in the conversation. I am of the same opinion with you, that as reason alone raises the man above the brute, so the pleasures arising in the mind from a reasonable conduct, must be infinitely superior to those of a mere sensualist. But how shall we be able to persuade these degenerate mortals to believe so? Though they have no notion of the pure enjoyments of the soul; though they are as lost to reason, as the herd that ranges in the field, or wallows in the sty; and, in short, though some of them have hardly anything of the man but the outward shape; yet they still assert the dignity of their nature, and would think it an affront to be put upon a level with their brethren of the grinning tribe, though their views, their desires, their gratifications, appear to be the same.' — 'Your observation is very just, Madam,' returned the clergyman; 'for it is not the external form which constitutes the man: brutes differ in shape; and were there any particular species of them found

out with features, proportions, and complexions exactly resembling ours, we should without hesitation consider them only as mere animals, while they wanted those noble qualifications of the mind, reason and judgment. Man (the lowest order of rational beings) is only raised above them by his intellectual faculties; by a light capable of directing his pursuits, and raising him to the sublimest elevation of passion and sentiment. Strip him of this, or, which is much the same to him, let it lie clouded and obscured, what is he but a grovelling animal, without any of the real and distinguishing perfections of human nature? There is indeed this difference in the case, that man is a brute by choice, they by necessity: he voluntarily prostitutes the noble powers of the soul, sinks below the dignity of his being, and prefers the pleasures of a mere animal to the manly entertainments of reason, the sublime raptures of an angel. How shocked are we at the birth of a monster, especially if it has a likeness in any of it's features to one of those creatures whom we justly regard as so much below us! We cannot here bear the least resemblance of the brute. Even the most bloody, the most hardened villain, is struck with horror at this external depravity in one of his own offspring, and sickens at the sight; yet at the same time he can support the more monstrous disproportion of his own corrupt and disordered appetites.' — 'Really,' replied Amelia, with a sprightly air, 'I think the irrational world are but little obliged to you for your comparisons: were they able to speak for themselves, they might very justly tell you, that they have no thoughts of luxury, pride, ambition, avarice, and the long train of enormities practised by mankind. The most savage and voracious animal never kills to encrease his wealth, or to open a way to grandeur. He slays to satisfy his hunger, or in a natural defence of his own life, or of those whom he is prompted by instinct to preserve.'

Lucius, perhaps influenced by an impulse of benevolence, which would not suffer him to hear this strong representation of the vices of mankind without feeling some uneasiness, preserved all this while a profound silence; but finding

finding they had done, he was going to make a reply, when I prevented him, by saying—'You were pleased, Sir, some time ago, to vindicate mankind from the charge of a natural depravity and propension to vice; and I must confess, that I was charmed with your reasoning, though what I have now heard makes me a little suspect it. You know, you endeavoured to prove from experience, that, so far from having any natural impulse to lead us on to vice, we had a moral sense implanted in the mind, directly calculated to spur us on to the most amiable heights of virtue; but how is this consistent with the picture that has been just given, in which, perhaps, the far greatest part of mankind is included? I freely confess, that your sentiments of the moral sense made such an impression upon my mind, that I have considered it as a very favourite opinion, and therefore have waited all this while in expectation of it's being brought into the subject, with which it seems to have some connection; but instead of that, reason alone has been mentioned; though I imagined, that those inward impulses to virtuous actions superseded the use of it. But both, I find, are insufficient for the happiness of mankind, since there is undoubtedly more vice than virtue in the world.'—'It must be acknowledged, Miss,' said Lucius, 'that there is too much reason for the disagreeable representation that has been made of a general depravity. The most sacred engagements are daily violated; friendship and love, the most endearing bonds of society, are made a cloak to perpetrate the most execrable villainies, the ruin of innocence, the destruction of the unsuspecting and honest man. The traitor to his country assumes the honourable name of the patriot, and pretends to be struggling for liberty, while he is only paving the way to greatness, in order to riot in the spoils of his injured fellow-subjects. In short, whole orders and degrees of men seem infected with the dreadful contagion of vice, and a more than brutal dissoluteness of manners. A dreadful spectacle indeed! a shocking depravity, that must fill every generous mind with an affectionate pity and concern! But let us leave this gloomy, this disagreeable subject; and, with hearts

warmed with a love of truth and virtue, impartially enquire if vice is really so prevalent as, upon a superficial view, it appears to be; by which means, I hope, you will be convinced, that virtue reigns more universally than vice; and that by the constitution of nature, mankind have, even in this imperfect state, more real, more exquisite happiness than misery: an estimate of the utmost consequence both to the honour of human nature, and to demonstrate the wisdom and benevolence of that moral Being, who is the father of the human soul, and the inviolable, inexhaustible source, of the most perfect and compleat goodness.

'In order then to form a right judgment of mankind, not the band of ruffians, not the publick or private stews, not the gloomy dungeon filled with guilty wretchedness; but mankind in general must be the subject of our examination. We must extend our views, and glance upon the virtues and vices of all the known world: and here we shall find the greatest reason for an universal benevolence; we shall see with pleasure a noble simplicity of manners, and an integrity of heart, delightfully conspicuous amidst the barbarism of ignorance, the superstition of wild uncultivated nations. We shall see the same love of their country, the same tender sensibilities of friendship, the same natural affection, the same reciprocal endearing offices of social life, among the far distant unpolished savages, as among the polite and learned Europeans. Nature even here works strongly; virtue and vice have names in all languages; and so deeply is the image of the Deity impressed upon universal nature, that every rational being has in general the same sense of an obligation, the same delightful sensations arising from the consideration of the native and intrinsic excellence of actions beneficent, disinterested and generous.

'Let us next consider if the usual manner of forming a judgment of private actions be consistent with truth and equity. While the mind, like the eye, can only glance on the surface of things, we can have but a very narrow view of the springs and motives which actuate even our dearest friends, and most intimate acquaintance. How incapable then are we to form a just opinion

‘ opinion of the actions of those whose passions, whose inclinations and peculiar turn of mind, we are entirely unacquainted with ! We are free in our censures; we precipitately blame the conduct of others; yet, however certain we may think the judgment is which we pass upon their conduct, a little time often convinces us, that our conclusion was formed merely upon fallacious appearances; and that we judged of the motive, not from the action it was really formed to produce, but from the false and deceitful light it appeared in to us: a consideration that should kill at once all disposition to calumny and censoriousness, the blackest and most ignominious of all vices. Thus it frequently happens, that those actions which, at first view, seem vicious, upon a more strict examination, appear to be strictly virtuous; and from this experience of the erroneousness of our judgments, and that the truth of the case, when discovered, generally leans to the side of virtue, it will not surely be thought unreasonable to conclude that it is generally so in other instances; and that if the real spring and motive to action was considered, virtue would preponderate, and her votaries be even more numerous than the votaries of vice.

‘ The moral sense, Madam, is a taste for what is amiable; that distinguishing faculty of the mind which makes us *feel*, sensibly and strongly *feel*, the harmony and discord of actions. It is the *touch*, the *ear* of the soul; while reason is the *eye* to regulate the exertions of this sympathetick faculty. The moral sense feels instantaneously, without waiting for the slow deliberation of the rational powers, to know if it ought to do so: while reason is given us to reign supreme, to examine the fitness of the object by which we are intendered, and to regulate in what manner we must exert our benevolent offices, so as best to render our endeavours subservient to the general good and happiness. Thus reason, like a mild and gracious prince, is to direct the will, and give laws to the passions and appetites, in such a manner as not only to promote the general interest and felicity of the mind it inhabits, but to diffuse it's friendly and benign influences to all it's fellow minds; and when this is the case, we act in confor-

‘ mity to the most perfect virtue. On the contrary, vice is nothing else but a misapplication and abuse of some right and laudable affections; so evident is it, without arguing from the perfections of the Deity, that he has not formed any of his creatures with a vicious bias and propensity.’

Here the clergyman seeing Lucius make a pause, rejoined—‘ The intention ought always to be the rule of our judgment on the conduct of others: for in this state of imperfection and difficulty, we are sometimes unable to reduce our wills, however regular, into proper action; and indeed the event does but seldom correspond with our dispositions. We ought not therefore to determine a character vicious from one or two bad actions; nor, from the comparatively few abandoned wretches, to pronounce human nature in general abandoned. But by what means are we able to judge of the intention, or to search into the secret springs of action? We cannot take in half those minute circumstances that attend them, the least of which might possibly be sufficient to alter our opinion: so far from this, we judge, not according to the temper and situation of the person censured, but from our own particular sense of things. Thus, to a generous, open mind, a little parsimony may appear as a mark of a narrow contracted spirit; but, upon examination into the person's circumstances, it will be found, perhaps, to be nothing more than a prudent concern for the welfare and support of his family; and, so far from being a blemish on his virtuous character, that it may be an effect of that virtue which it seems to contradict. But, farther to illustrate this engaging truth, which seems absolutely necessary to the peace and satisfaction of every benevolent and compassionate mind, let us consider that, in this state of imperfection, we are no more capable of arriving at a perfection in vice, than we are of virtue. The most abandoned of our species have some amiable qualities which it is impossible for them to erase: virtue has still some engaging charms; nor is it possible for any man of common sense not to feel the force of it's attractive beauties; therefore if, deceived by false appearances and delusive prospects of present pleasure, they

they rebel in one instance, there are others in which they venerate her sacred laws.'

Be sincere now, my dear Charlotte, and confess that I have wearied you with the repetition of this grave conversation. A variety of other remarks were made upon the same subjects, which entertained us till we arrived at the house; but, in pity to you and myself, I shall make haste to conclude, and only say, that we were entertained with much politeness by my Lord; when having drank tea, we drove home, highly delighted with our agreeable excursion. But there is one particular that I ought not to forget to mention, and that is, that before I took leave of Lucius, I found an opportunity to give him my letter. He received it with an air of astonishment and confusion, imagining, I believe, that it was his own I returned; but a sudden glance of his eye in a moment discovered his mistake, when his countenance changed from a troubled paleness to a glowing red. He had not then an opportunity of speaking to me; but giving me a look sparkling with joy and surprize, he retired in such a manner as discovered his impatience to know the contents. I am now heartily weary; and, begging you would pardon the impertinence of your friend, subscribe myself, Madam, your most obliged, affectionate friend,

FELICIA.

LETTER IX.

MY DEAR ENGAGING FRIEND,

COULD I possibly imagine that, with a temper so easy, gay, and sprightly, I should be able to make such a change in your disposition, as I find my illness has occasioned! How endearing is that tender concern, that pleasing warmth of affection, with which you interest yourself in my disorder, and endeavour to support my spirits by soothing sympathies, the reviving consolations of friendship!

It is now two months since I was seized with a fever, and I have yet hardly strength to write to you; but I cannot forbear making an attempt to remove your fears, by telling you as soon as possible, that I am at last out of danger. I have lately had a near prospect of death; but while I stood upon the verge of that

awful state, that undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns; I felt my mind calm and serene, as if charmed with the inspiring harmony of some angelick choir: all before me was extasy! the most transporting extasy! raptures unutterable! delights boundless and eternal! But my intervals of sense were short, and disturbed with pain; I was almost continually delirious; and in these distractions of mind incessantly repeated the beloved name of my dear Lucius. I gave him the tenderest epithets; and, wrapt in a fond delusion of thought, fancied he walked with me through the most delicious scenes imagination could paint, uttering the softest, the most melting words; to which I replied in terms full of the same passionate tenderness. The whole family were witnesses of these wild roving of fancy, which cannot fail of raising some suspicions of what I have endeavoured to conceal with the utmost care; though none but Amelia has taken notice of it to me. But how Lucius behaved I am yet altogether unacquainted, nor durst I enquire.

I find, my dear Charlotte, that I must break off: a painful languor depresses my soul; my spirits sink, and I am too much fatigued to proceed. If what I write is either unintelligible, or more than commonly incoherent, a trembling hand and giddy head are my excuse; but, however indisposed I am, nothing shall excuse me from being, dear Madam, sincerely yours,

FELICIA.

LETTER X.

MADAM,

I Am now able to write you a longer letter than my last; a circumstance that gives me the highest pleasure; so glad am I of resuming my literary conversation with you.

As soon as I was able to leave my room and receive company, I had a visit from the maiden lady, Mr. Stevens's sister, whom I shall disguise under the name of Prudilla; and indeed I had no reason to be offended at seeing her, since I might well bear with her impertinence for the sake of the person she brought with her. Lucius, impatient for an opportunity of seeing me, which he durst not even attempt alone, for fear of giving my aunt some suspicion of the interest

interest he had in my recovery, had offered his service to wait upon her; which she accepting, gave us both the means of indulging, by our mutual glances, the tender sentiments which swelled our bosoms. The moment he entered the room, I could read in his looks that he had a thousand things to say to me, only proper to be uttered in private. His countenance discovered a joy, which glowed in every feature; but when he congratulated me upon my returning health, a fear of saying too much made him say too little; but however few his words, the air and moving tone in which he uttered them sufficiently expressed how much they came from his heart. 'Need I tell you, Madam,' said he, turning his back to my aunt, doubtless to prevent her reading his looks, 'that I sympathize with the rest of your friends in their joy for your recovery?' While a starting tear, and a glance the most charmingly tender, made me at once interpret his meaning, and fancy that he would have said—'O my dear! with what transport do I see you again! How vastly does my extasy at your recovery exceed the cold joy of these other friends!'

Our first compliments being over, and abundance of questions asked, concerning the nature and progress of my illness, Prudilla introduced a piece of private history, which gave her a charming opportunity of indulging for a few minutes her prevailing inclinations for detraction. 'Have you heard the news, ladies?' said she, assuming an air of starched modesty: 'really, it is so extraordinary, that it makes one ashamed of one's sex. To what a preposterous height of wickedness is the world grown! Positively one is surprized to think of the imprudence of some people. Would you think it? Miss Lucy was—— I blush for the creature.'—'Pray, Madam,' said my aunt, 'explain yourself; what of Miss Lucy?'—'Really,' rejoined Prudilla, 'the affair is so indecent, that it is a shock to modesty but to mention it.'—'Well, Madam,' said I, 'rather than offend your delicacy, we will let Miss Lucy alone, and change the subject.'—'That is kind, my dear,' returned she, smiling: 'she was brought to bed last night. I am sure I am all of a flame now,' added she; 'and the creature——' 'O Madam,' cried Lu-

cius, with a design to make her change the subject, 'that modest blush becomes you incomparably!' Here all the company smiled, for Prudilla's cheeks discovered not the least tincture of her pretended confusion: however, his artifice had no effect. 'Really,' resumed she, bridling back her head, and drawing up her lips, 'a blush does sometimes become one mightily, which is some recompence for the pain it gives one—but, as I was saying, the thing has the impudence to excuse herself by pretending——' At this moment my physician entered the room, and gave her the mortification of being again interrupted, by his asking me several questions; but at last taking a chair, she resumed a third time—'As I was saying, Madam——' 'Pray, ladies,' cried the physician, interrupting her again, 'may I know the subject of your conversation?'—'Yes, Sir,' replied Amelia: 'our friend here was mentioning a circumstance relating to an unhappy lady that has been deluded, and was brought to bed last night.'—'Very good,' replied he. 'Not so good neither,' cried the prude in a peevish tone: 'the impudent slut would excuse herself, by saying——' 'O, she would persuade us to believe, I suppose,' cried the doctor, with a sneer, 'that the young gentleman, after promising her marriage, and swearing a thousand oaths to convince her of his fidelity, finding at last all his arguments prove unsuccessful, in a fit of despair drew his sword; when, pointing it to his bosom, he pretended that, since she was so cruel as to distrust his sincerity, he would give her the last proof of the violence of his passion. Here, terrified at this dreadful sight, and melting with pity, she flies upon him, stops his hand, tells him that she is convinced of his sincerity, and will give him every proof of it he can reasonably desire. He now eagerly seizes the tender moment, presses her close, till she at last consents to purchase his life with the loss of what ought to be infinitely dearer to her than her own: while he, in the mean time, laughs to find her become the dupe of his artifice; ridicules her foolish fondness, that could make her think him in earnest; and, in short, glories in the noble victory he has gained over her honour. This, to be sure, was the case,' continued

qued he; 'at least we should be charitable enough to think so, in vindication of the poor lady.'

We all smiled at this piece of raillery; while Prudilla discovered, by her unsettled looks, that she was at a loss to know whether she ought to disapprove or commend this instance of the physician's vivacity; since she could not guess whether it was intended to ridicule all the excuses that could be made in her favour, or to apologize for her conduct. But, the moment he had done speaking, Lucius rejoined, with a modest, unaffected air—'We ought not to wonder, if an artful villain can sometimes triumph over a mind, who, knowing itself incapable of deceit, can hardly be brought to suspect another, especially the man she loves, of a guilt the most black and shocking to nature: but that an honest man should be so hurried away by the favour of impetuous desire, is indeed a case very extraordinary, and not easily accounted for. Can a virtuous man be so void of reason, so lost to prudence and the tender delicacies of an innocent passion, as to hazard for a moment the honour and reputation of her he loves? Will he not even distrust himself? Nay, supposing him ever so certain of the integrity of his own heart, are there not a variety of circumstances which may render it impossible for him to fulfil his engagements? And must not the bare possibility of this damp even the very first idea of a too precipitate pleasure which may be so dearly bought? The least apprehension of ruining the object of his tenderest affections, must surely give him the most dreadful alarms, and fill his mind with the most dreadful fears, the most terrible conflicts.'—'And is it not equally surprising,' returned my aunt, 'that a modest lady can hear a proposal of this kind without being shocked! without looking into the gulf of misery and ruin which lies before her! without trembling at the dangers which surround her! without imploring the Divine assistance, and resolving to lose her life, rather than taint her virtue, or surrender her honour upon the fairest promises! But, alas! we frequently see people act without thought, and, unintimidated by the misery of those who have fallen into the same snare, precipitately rush upon their own de-

struction! A promise of marriage is the usual bait; but this unhappy lady's story ought to convince every one that, even in the nearest prospect of that union, it is the highest degree of folly and madness to drop the guard of innocence, and allow her intended husband liberties inconsistent with decency, and the reserve of a modest prudence.'

'It is a great misfortune,' rejoined Lucius with an air of candour, 'that in this case a false step (which may possibly proceed from nothing more than imprudence, or a too easy confidence) should be attended with such dreadful consequences with respect to the ladies, and one action throw an indelible stain on the fairest character; while another person, of an infinitely worse disposition, may indulge the rancour of her heart in sporting with the honour and reputation of thousands. Miss Lucy is a lady possessed of so many virtues, that if the case required it, every one, I think, would be glad of seeing reason to believe her less criminal than she may appear at first view; but, if I am not misinformed, there is no need of wishing for reasons to excuse her conduct. A variety of extraordinary circumstances are in her favour: her modesty and virtue have stood the severest shock; and, if it be thought that she has here lost all pretensions to them, it ought to be considered too, that the day she forfeited them appeared to her, and to all her friends, the last of her freedom. The next day was to have given him that right to her person, which love, a reciprocal love, had constituted long before. She was his by obligations the most sacred and binding; obligations that can only be confirmed and rendered legal by the assistance of the magistrate or priest. They thought themselves secure in each other's fidelity; they fancied nothing could prevent the happy ceremony from being solemnized: but, alas! life itself is precarious; that very night he was seized with a malignant fever, which, though it carried him off in a few days, in all his intervals of sense he acknowledged his engagements; and, even in his last moments, he called her his wife; and confirmed the right he had given her in his will to possess his estate, by frequently expressing his desire of having

' it faithfully executed.'—'How!' cried Prudilla, in a lofty tone of authority, 'do you pretend to vindicate the creature? If she has lost her reputation, it is no more than she deserves. I would have no mercy on such impudent, confident things. Can any punishment be great enough for the sluts who are such a disgrace to the modesty of our sex? They should be all burnt alive, or hanged at least.'—'Hold, Madam,' replied my aunt, hastily interrupting her; 'indeed, you are too severe. It must be confessed, indeed, that both she and her lover were much to blame: they were certainly guilty of the highest degree of imprudence and folly; but you ought to consider, too, that virtue does not consist in the loss of humanity and good manners. I was present when the young gentleman expired; and was witness of a scene that I shall never forget as long as I live; the very remembrance brings tears to my eyes. A few minutes before he breathed his last, his senses, which had been long disturbed, returned; when calling for his dear wife, Lucy, who sat near the bed drowned in grief, and fatigued with constant watching, started from her silent sadness, while her impatience to know what he had to say, suspended for a moment the falling tear. He pressed her in his weak and trembling arms, and endeavoured in the most endearing manner to enable her to support his loss; said the kindest, the most affecting things; till at last his countenance brightening into a placid serenity, he lifted up his eyes to Heaven, and still pressing her hand, seemed to make her the subject of some ardent petition; but he had no sooner finished his silent ejaculations, than fixing a most tender look upon her, he cried—'Adieu! my Lucy, my wife!' when shutting his eyes, he sunk upon the pillow and expired. But what words can express the unhappy Lucy's despair! She fainted away upon his lifeless body; her cheek lay upon his, and equalled the mortal paleness of that it pressed. I assisted in carrying her out of the room, and recovering her senses; but they no sooner returned, than (sad effect of the most violent grief!) her tears, her incessant tears, were stopped; and she gave way to a silent sober melancholy, infinitely more terrible than the strongest impulses of raging despair.'—'Alas!'

cried Lucius, in a tone that plainly expressed the compassionate disposition of his heart, 'how much is this poor lady to be pitied! but would not her distress, her shame, her infamy, have been greater, if her grief had sprung from his infidelity rather than his death? She now justly laments a man every way worthy of her esteem and affection; his memory is still dear to her; his virtues are a pleasing subject of melancholy delight and soothing pain. But with what agonies of rage, vexation, and madness, would she have sustained the shock of finding the man false on whose fidelity she had reposed her honour! with what mortifying inquietudes would she find herself condemned by him she loved! yet the guilt would in fact be his; the folly and imprudence hers. Conscious of the purity of an innocent heart, her severest reproaches must fall upon the guilty villain, the barbarous betrayer of her peace and happiness, and not immediately on herself. Yet how vastly different must be the reflections of a lady in these circumstances, from those of the self-detested prostitute, the abandoned wretch, who from avarice, ambition, or guilty desire, covers herself with eternal infamy and reproach; with irreparable loss of honour; with the aversion of all the wise and good; with the silent, but infinitely more dreadful upbraidings of a guilty conscience; the horrors of remorse, and that agonizing dread which accompanies a consciousness of the Divine displeasure, doubly terrible in all her views of futurity! What superlative wretchedness! Can imagination paint any distress equal to that which thus arises from the racking perturbation of a mind ashamed of itself? or can all the boasted advantages of wealth, pride, and successful ambition, (the trifles for which the tranquil sweets of innocence are forfeited) support the spirits sinking under such a flood of complicated misery?'

Here Lucius concluded; and some ladies coming in at the same time, the conversation took a different turn. I leave you now, my dear Charlotte, to make what reflections you please upon what I have here related; but I could not see Lucius retire with the rest, without feeling an uneasiness that let me know the excess of my passion. However, he had the address, in parting, to

slip the following letter into my hand unperceived; he delivered it with an air of tenderness, saying with a low voice—
 ‘ Since I am not permitted, Madam, either to send or speak to you alone, forgive the absurdity of my being my own messenger.’ I made no other answer than wishing him a good night; and as soon as he was gone, seized the first opportunity of retiring to my chamber, when securing the door, to prevent my being surprized, I broke open the seal, and read the following lines—

‘ DEAR MADAM,

‘ IF you knew with what an excess of grief I have lamented your illness, while I considered you on the borders of the grave, you might perhaps form some idea of that sweet, that transporting joy, with which I find you returning to life, and all the satisfactions of health and ease. I cannot help regarding your physician as my dearest friend; I could hug him to my bosom for contributing to your recovery, at the same time that I bless the unseen hand of Providence, and pour out my grateful heart to that most gracious Being who has heard my prayers, who has beheld with compassion my incessant tears. Amelia’s friendship for my sister, and the concern they have both in all that relates to you, have procured me an opportunity of learning every day the state of your disorder, without my running the hazard of discovering my passion to your aunt, by a solicitude that would doubtless render me suspected. Yet what a multitude of hopes and fears has this correspondence given! in a swift succession they have raised my soul to sudden rapture, and then sunk me down into the most dreadful despair! Sad vicissitude! All my happiness seemed to depend upon your life; and while that was at stake, a prospect of inevitable misery lay before me. All joy seemed departing. A solitary sadness, a dreary gloom, hung upon my spirits, and hovered round the various beauties of nature; they had no charms for me. Not wealth nor titles, with all their splendour, could have calmed the anguish occasioned by your loss. While I thought that the most lovely form and the fairest mind were near being separated, my heart-strings were ready to burst, as if the very feat

of life and vital heat was going to be torn from my bosom. Religion only had power to moderate my grief, and by its reviving consolations disperse the darkening clouds which hung about my soul. But how shall I be able to describe the sudden extasy, the transporting rapture, which filled my breast, when I heard that you were out of danger! I sickened with a sweet excess of delight. But, alas! to what purpose are these involuntary transports? Why do I place all my happiness in seeing and hearing you, since no sacred ties will ever bind us together, and secure the continuance of these innocent enjoyments? Accept, however, of my warmest congratulations; and while my happiness depends entirely upon yours, believe me to be the sincerest and most affectionate of your servants,

‘ LUCIUS.’

I confess, my dear friend, that I could not read this letter without tears, and indulging some reflections on the unhappiness of my situation; but as it is time to conclude my long epistle, I shall pass over these unquiet thoughts, and subscribe myself your most hearty friend,

FELICIA.

LETTER XI.

FROM Amaranthine bowers, and embrowning shades; from flowery lawns, and all the silent solemn scenes of peaceful innocence and harmless love; thy friend Felicia greets her other self, her dear, her much loved Charlotte.

Don’t you think now, my dear, by this beginning, that I am tolerably well read in romance, and have drank deep of the spirit of those extraordinary performances? At least I think I ought to have some knowledge of them, since I seem to be writing one myself. My plot now begins to thicken; and I shall certainly, if ever these letters come to light, be considered, in some future time, as a little heroine; while Lucius will have an undisputed claim to the honour of being the hero of my story. He has now a very formidable obstacle to encounter with, before he can even hope to arrive at the height of his happiness; but you need not be frightened, here are no fiery dragons to conquer, or enchant-

ed castles to storm; my pastoral adventure will furnish no such prodigies. I will therefore leave these marvellous events to the doughty wonder-working champions of ancient date, and content myself with sticking close to truth and nature; and don't doubt but that, in the rustick simplicity in which I spend my time, I shall furnish a history at least as entertaining as theirs. And, indeed, whatever name is given to my story, whether of rural adventures, novel, or romance, I should be very well satisfied, though all the world thought it fictitious, might I at last (which I hardly dare hope for) have it concluded, like the most celebrated pieces of imaginary scenes of love and gallantry, in a happy catastrophe.

As I am very fond of my cousin Polly, who is one of the prettiest little creatures you ever saw, I frequently amuse myself, and divert her, with gathering flowers, making garlands, and sometimes placing them in her hair, or adorning her head with a wreath, as agreeable for it's odours as for the intermingled lustre of it's glowing colours. You cannot imagine, Madam, how charmingly the dear child looks when thus adorned; you would be apt to take her for some little sylvan deity, or one of the inhabitants of the skies. The weather being extremely fine, we went yesterday morning into the garden to divert ourselves in this innocent manner; when having spent some time in our childish pastime, a desire to indulge at large my own reflections, made me leave my young companion, and retire into a neighbouring field; there I seated myself on a rising bank, beneath which ran a stream that, flowing swiftly with a gentle murmur, drew my attention, and fixed my eyes upon the various-coloured pebbles which shone through the liquid crystal. But though these trifles engaged my looks, my heart was fixed upon an object infinitely more important; I was thinking of my dear Lucius, and enumerating in idea not only his several perfections, but recollecting all the fine things I had heard him say: and could I be entertained in a manner more delightful? But I had not long indulged these pleasing contemplations, when I was interrupted by my little prattler, who seeing me at a distance, came running with her hands full of flowers. I

was then so buried in thought, that I did not see her till she was almost come up to me, when calling me to look at her treasure, and to observe some carnations she herself had been placing in her hair, I was so vexed at being disturbed in my pleasing dreams, that I could not help answering her a little peevishly, and desiring her to leave me. She was justly surprized to see my humour so soon changed; and, with a voice that spoke her out of breath with running, said, she wondered how she had made me angry; but that she would not leave me till I had forgiven her. The tears now trickling down her rosy cheeks, made me in a moment ashamed of my sudden ill-nature. I took her in my arms, and fondly kissing her, told her I only desired to be a few minutes alone, and begged she would tell me what she wanted. 'You told me,' said she, resuming her usual sweetness, 'that these flowers made me look very pretty; won't they, Madam, make you look pretty too? I wanted to make you as fine as you made me. Won't you let me dress your head?' I could not help smiling at this question; but upon her persisting in her request, I at last consented; and fancying nobody could possibly see me, resolved to do as she desired, and afterwards lead her through the garden, to divert my aunt and Amelia with her childish frolick. I therefore took a ribband out of my pocket, and enamelling it with the brightest colours I could select from those she brought me, bound it round my head; when an impulse of curiosity made me hastily go nearer the brook, to place it to advantage, and see how well it became me. Here I staid some time with my eyes fixed on the watery mirror, holding the beauteous child by her hand, and observing the different effects these fantastick ornaments had in the countenances of our shadowy images. I was now in a most gay and lively humour, and lifting up my eyes with a chearful smile, was going to propose our return home, when I was struck with the sight of a well-dressed gentleman, who stood gazing upon us from the opposite bank, and who had doubtless been a witness of all my fooleries. Innocent as my amusement had been, I could not at first recover from the confusion and disorder this spectator gave me. However, I turned

turned hastily, and taking hold of Miss Polly's hand, began to move towards the garden; at the same time pulling off my various-coloured tiara, threw it on the ground; when the stranger having stood still for a moment, suddenly leaped from the opposite bank, hastened after me, and seizing the hand that was at liberty, after a deluge of compliments, which discovered at least his good-breeding, conducted me home. My aunt immediately, by her behaviour, let me see that she was far from being displeased with my companion; she treated him with the utmost respect, yet endeavoured frequently to dive into his thoughts, by examining his countenance with a scrupulous and steady inspection. She seemed to penetrate his very soul; not the least gesture could escape her notice; yet she was so cautious in these piercing regards, that it was impossible for him to observe them; and indeed her looks all the while expressed a satisfaction that let me see that, whatever discoveries she had made, they were far from being disagreeable to her; for whenever my eyes met hers, I could easily discern an affectionate kind of joy, which seemed to arise from the tender glow of a warm heart.

The gentleman behaved all this while with the most perfect ease and freedom; and, without appearing under the least constraint by the old lady's presence, entertained me with the confident freedom of an old lover, who thinks he has a right to our tenderness and respect. Nay, he told my aunt, even in my presence, the situation in which he found me; the manner in which he said I attracted his eyes, and heart; informed her of the minutest circumstance relating to my behaviour; described the flowers which adorned my head; drew a comparison between them; and, to use his own words, the more lovely and attractive beauties of my cheeks. Nor was my shape, my air, forgotten; he took me for some goddess; I could certainly be no less than one of the immortals. Here he discovered all the heathen mythology he had learnt at school; protested that he mistook me for Flora; and lest I should be too simple to understand the honour that was done me by this comparison, told me that she was one of the most charming of all the goddesses, and could be equalled in beauty by none upon earth but me. In short, he even offered

to go himself and fetch the flowery wreath that so much became me; assured us, that the first moment he saw me was the last of his liberty; and asserted, that if I would consent to be his, he should ever after our marriage oblige me to perpetuate the remembrance of that happy day, by wearing upon it a like blooming crown.

Thus he ran on for a quarter of an hour together, without giving either my aunt or me an opportunity of speaking a single syllable; he was all life and gaiety, and attempted to divert me at the same time that he strove to find a way to my heart. He thought it impossible that I should be insensible to the force of flattery, and therefore attacked my vanity with incessant praises. One moment he seemed melting in tenderness; but then immediately recovering himself, as dreading my taking an advantage of his weakness to use him ill, laughed at his own passion, and seeming to triumph over it, turned it into ridicule, with a vivacity accompanied with abundance of wit and humour. In short, he is the most sprightly unaffected creature you ever beheld; for even affectation in him must lose its name; every thing is natural, genteel, and easy.

But I had not been long in his company, when my aunt, fancying that she might possibly be a restraint to us both, took an opportunity to leave the room. However, his behaviour was still the same; he smiled and looked grave; he sighed and laughed; he sung a languishing strain, the next moment hummed a rigadon, and capered about the room; but yet it was not difficult to discover, that though his temper naturally inclined him to be gay, it would have been now much more easy to him, and doubtless more pleasing too, to have assumed a behaviour more agreeable to the situation of his heart. In spite of all his efforts, love still had the mastery; and methought his sighs appeared much more genuine than those starts of airy sprightliness under which he endeavoured to conceal them. He would have me consider him as a lover, though he was unwilling to appear with the languishing tenderness of one that felt the full power of that passion. Yet, in his very attempts to shew his liberty, he rattled his chains. I am sure you would have laughed as heartily at his behaviour as I did; for indeed he is one of the most

most odd, fantastick, agreeable fellows, that ever assumed the tender name of a lover. But as I have given you Lucius's picture, you may expect that I should give you his too: take it then as follows.

He is pretty tall, and of the just mean between too fat or too lean; his shape is genteel and easy; his air, that of a fine gentleman who has seen the world; his complexion fair, his forehead large, his eyes brisk and full of fire; his nose of a moderate size; his mouth rather too wide, but rendered agreeable by a constant smile which sits on his lips, and dimples in his cheeks; and as to his chin, I assure you, it is not less regular than any other feature in his face. But I must not forget to mention his dress, which in this rustick part of the country appears very singular: every thing about him is of the newest fashion; nor does he want any ornament to set off his person to advantage. This is an exact portrait of the gay, the janty, the confident Mellifont; and by the description I have already given you of him, you will readily imagine that poor Lucius has a very formidable rival.

After having diverted me for near two hours, with a thousand agreeable extravagancies, he bid me adieu; but, before he left the house, had a private conversation of some minutes with my aunt, who, as soon as he was gone, came to me; when seating herself in a chair close to mine, she told me with a smile, that the gentleman had been begging her leave to continue his visits; that she knew him to be of a good family, and possessed of an estate of three thousand a year; and added, that if he was agreeable to me, and was really as much in love as he pretended, she thought I could not make a better choice. I replied with a good deal of truth, that however diverting his company had been, he had not yet made any impression upon my heart; and that, agreeable as his levity might render him to other women, I could not help thinking that a lasting happiness must be built upon a more solid foundation than the airy flights of such a giddy volatile temper. 'I must confess,' Madam, said I, 'that his person and behaviour would render his addresses acceptable to the far greater part of our sex, who are perhaps too easily pleased with a gay appearance. His confidence might, in their opinion, appear heroick, and carry along with it irre-

sistible charms; but I shall never think a man has any degree of tenderness for me, while I have not the power to soften him too much for him to discover all his sprightliness in my presence.' My aunt smiled at this reply; and only answered, that she would not advise me to any thing contrary to my inclinations; and Amelia and Polly coming in at the same time, we dropt the subject.

I have nothing further to add, than that I am, my dear Charlotte, your most obedient servant,

FELICIA.

LETTER XII.

I SHALL not pretend, my dear Charlotte, to decide whether the extraordinary assurance of Mellifont, or the diffidence of Lucius, is the most excusable quality; they are both certainly very great foibles when carried to excess. But as confidence and folly are nearly allied, so modesty is a weakness, if it suppresses a man's virtue, and hides it from the world; if it fetters his mind, and restrains his actions when he desires to exert himself. But if Lucius appears, even upon a superficial view, superior to Mellifont, notwithstanding the thick shade which, instead of shewing his merit to advantage, obscures some of his brightest excellencies, how much more amiable must he appear than that gentleman, if it be considered that his good qualities are set in the most glaring and striking light, and that his very follies are some of his greatest perfections!

I told you in my last, that Amelia's entering the room put an end to the conversation I had with my aunt upon the merit and fortune of Mellifont; but I forgot to add, that upon our telling my cousin of the visit I had received from my gay spark, I perceived that she changed colour; and immediately her countenance, which at first had all the marks of ease and good humour, discovered the evident symptoms of a thoughtful disturbance; nor should I perhaps have called this circumstance to mind, which I then took but little notice of, had not her behaviour since that time awakened my attention, and quickened my apprehension.

Though her temper is naturally rather grave than sprightly, yet I had always remarked in her a most agreeable even-

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ness of disposition, a flow of serene and tranquil spirits, which gave an engaging cheerfulness to her behaviour, and rendered her equally acceptable to others, and happy in herself: this was an observation that her whole deportment had confirmed ever since I knew her; but now that placid serenity, which sweetened our conversation, and greatly enhanced the pleasures of our mutual friendship, seemed interrupted; she sought for opportunities of being alone, and discovered a reserve which I really thought her incapable of. I have had a visit in form from Mellifont almost every day since the date of my last. He comes in his coach, with a pompous equipage, and dressed with as much splendor as if he had prepared to appear in the drawing-room on a birth-night; while every visit seems to increase poor Amelia's discontent and coldness to me.

Two days ago, as I was taking a turn in the garden, I found her seated in a pensive posture, in a painted alcove at the end of an alley the most obscure and retired. She seemed lost in thought; and leaning her head upon her hands, with both her elbows fixed upon the table, was doubtless indulging some serious reflections: but, whatever was the subject of her contemplations, the rustling I made amongst the leaves of some boughs, which for want of cutting crossed the path, and which rebounded back as I forced my way through them, soon made her lift up her eyes; when coming towards me—'My dear,' cried I, 'you will think me, perhaps, guilty of ill manners, for being so rude as to intrude upon your solitude: but no matter; my affection for you gives me some right to your confidence; and therefore, in the name of friendship, I desire you will either make me as grave as yourself, or permit me the pleasure of forcing you to partake of my gaiety. Come, let me know the cause of this change—some doleful ditty! some tender tale of love! Come, come, out with it.' Here taking hold of her hand, I began to lead her back to the alcove; when turning her head away, with an air of unaffected coldness, she gave a deep sigh, and then begged that I would be so kind as to let her go, since she was in an ill humour, and was very unwilling to infect me. 'Nay,' Amelia, said I, 'I have no right to detain you against your inclinations; I

thought I might be so happy as to divert you: I hope you will not think an unseasonable attempt of this kind unpardonable.'—'No, my dear,' said she, 'you are extremely obliging; but, as I shall be but a disagreeable companion, I chuse to retire.' At this she left me; when standing still for a moment, to think whither I should ramble, I saw her returning. She begged pardon for her ill manners; and, making some apologies, asked at last how I liked Mellifont, and what I thought of his addresses? I laughed at her question; and readily replied, that I thought him a much more agreeable companion than a lover. 'Nay, my dear Felicia,' said she, with jealousy in her eyes, 'don't dissemble; are not you charmed with his company?'—'Not as a lover, I assure you,' said I: 'he is indeed one of the most agreeable impertinents I ever beheld. But why this question? Have you any private interest in view, that you ask it? Come, be frank now; and if it will be any satisfaction to you, I here resign all pretensions to his heart. I should be very glad of being excused from the trouble of receiving his visits, though I can't deny but there is a pleasure attends the homage of a man of his humour and appearance; they soothe our vanity, give us an air of importance, and flatter our prevailing desire of making captivess.'—'But this is a very ill-natured pleasure,' replied Amelia, with some warmth; 'and I thought you had too much good sense, as well as humanity, to indulge it at the expence of the ease and happiness of a worthy gentleman. Besides, it is dangerous sport with the tenderness of a man of such merit; for while you hover round the flame, you may possibly burn your wings.'—'No, never fear it,' returned I; 'I am in no danger, I assure you: but if he will pay his addresses to me, how can I prevent it? Am I answerable for his folly? I have used no arts to retain him; and, indeed, have been so far from indulging my pride at the expence of his peace, that I have endeavoured as much as possible to make him lose all hope of obtaining my affection.' Amelia's countenance now cleared up; a rising joy sparkled in her eyes, and gave an agreeable flush to her cheeks; and, in short, she had all that air of ease and satisfaction

tisfaction which our looks commonly express when we feel our hearts eased of a burthen which distorts it's tender fibres, and gives us the most racking pain: but presently assuming an air of softness, she confessed, with a low voice, (as if dreading, even in that retired place, a witness of her melting passion) that she loved the dear engaging Mellifont; but she had no sooner eased her bosom of this important secret, than a rustick blush, with all the marks of a confusion which springs from innocence and artless simplicity, overspread her face, and made her hang down her head: but at last recovering herself, she told me she had seen Mellifont a few days before he paid me my first visit; that she was charmed with his person, but did not perceive that he had made any extraordinary impression on her heart, till she found that he paid his addresses to me; when love, jealousy, and despair, contributed all their force to render her unhappy. She then asked me, with a smile that demanded my confidence, if I was less sensible of the merit of Lucius than she of Mellifont? and told me, that suspecting it while I was sick, from the tender things I said of him, she sent to let Marilla know, that if her brother had a real affection for me, it would be then imprudent to continue his visits; and that having learnt from her friend the violence of his passion, she had used all her art to prevent giving him the uneasiness he might feel at finding me in the company of his rival. Sensible of the advantages I received from her prudent precaution, and reflecting that my aunt would probably, without her assistance to keep it secret, have been by this time fully convinced of my tenderness for Lucius, I returned her my sincerest thanks. We then talked of his perfections—delightful subject!—in which she seemed to strive to outdo me, in giving him the praises due to his merit; while the reserve which for several days had subsisted between us, now ending in a mutual open confidence, bound us closer to each other, by shewing her the folly of her groundless distrust, and strengthening and enlarging my esteem for her, who, in the midst of her jealous fears, took care of my happiness, and provided against the discovery of a secret, on the concealment of which all my future felicity depended. We embraced with the utmost affection, and made reciprocal

promises of treating each other for the future without disguise, the very appearance of which was now below the dignity of our friendship. Our hearts were to lie open, and not the least circumstance relating to the happiness of each other concealed. What a pleasing intercourse of tender passion! All jealousy being now removed, she strove to increase the ardour of my love for Lucius, by relating a thousand circumstances in his favour; while her praises gave me a delight infinitely superior to any flattery bestowed upon myself. Wrapt up in the soft satisfaction she gave me, I gratefully returned the obligation, by mentioning all the agreeable things that could justly be said of Mellifont, to which she listened with equal eagerness, and the same excess of soothing pleasure.

We now walk an hour every day to talk on the same subject, and I do not believe we either of us find our delight grow less by the repetition. Love is an inexhaustible theme; it furnishes our conversation with the most delicate, refined, and exquisite ideas; it raises us above ourselves; and not only inspires an elevation of sentiment, but gives us a very noble and sublime manner of expressing what it dictates: so that were you to hear us on this melting subject, you would smile at our diction, and the tender cadence of our periods; and be much more ready to take us for a couple of theatrical heroines, rehearsing the parts of two languishing princesses, than for rural nymphs, unaccustomed to high flights and lofty strains, whose only perfection consists in being pastoral lovers. Sometimes we walk for two minutes together in eloquent silence; then, after a sigh or two still more eloquent, we burst into some moving complaint on the severity of Fortune, in making her love a person in wealth her superior, and me a youth unblest with the advantages I enjoy.

Thus I employ the time of Lucius's absence, in a way most agreeable to that esteem and affection I shall always have for him; while absence, instead of removing the tender softness of my heart, renders every thought of him still dearer to me, and presents him to my mind in every new charm which fancy or love can invent.

But I would not have you imagine, Madam, that we spend all our time in these useless lamentations; we have read novels,

novels, romances, and plays, and have therefore some notion of plots and stratagems: but I believe we were neither of us formed for intrigue, since, with all our industry, we cannot yet invent any method to procure me the company of my lover, that will not render us liable to suspicion from my aunt. Besides, Mellifont is a constant interruption to my happiness by his perpetual visits; for I cannot resolve to see Lucius at a time when we should be so liable to be disturbed by that intruder's presence. His company, on this account, grows distasteful to me, and it is with the utmost difficulty that I keep within the bounds of good-manners. But I am afraid of disobliging him, lest he should acquaint my father with his passion, which he would doubtless approve; and lest my refusing to gratify him in this particular, should offend him so much, as to make him cross me in the dearest interests of my heart. I am, Madam, yours, &c.

FELICIA.

LETTER XIII.

MADAM,

NOT the cooling shade of some friendly bower, the fanning breeze of Zephyrs, or the agreeable freshness of some limpid stream, could give greater delight to the laborious hind, scorched with the meridian sun's too ardent beams, than I received from the news of your being already joined, by the most sacred bonds, to the gay, the tender Philario. May all your days be propitious! May blooming joys, ever opening with new delight, perpetuate your felicity! May his lordship's affection, instead of decreasing with time, ripen into that soft esteem, that tender complacency, which are the natural attendants of love and merit, and the highest summit of all sublunary happiness! In short, may you be bound to him with all that dignity of passion which is necessary to render him ever as dear to you as now; while love shall have the energy of religion, and inclination the force of every sacred dictate!

You see, Madam, what an awkward creature I would have you. To dare to be happy is a thing so unfashionable, that it may possibly require some degree of resolution to withstand the shock of

being thought that dull thing called a *fond wife*: but however unpolite it is to have any degree of affection subsist between those who ought to have the greatest, you have too much good sense to be ashamed of what must now not only be the essence of your happiness, but your highest glory. How strange is it, that a name, a mere sound, and a sound, too, to which we have no settled meaning, should have such an influence upon mankind, as to make them cancel all the engagements of duty, affection, and happiness, and even forfeit all their hopes of a blissful futurity! What bewitching charm, what dire spell, what strange enchantment, is contained in the word *polite*, that it should controul our very passions, and make us suffer greater pangs of self-denial to become vicious, than would be sufficient to raise us to the highest attainments of heroick virtue! To be thought *polite*, how many ladies are contented to be fashionably miserable? To be thought *polite*, an old sop, decrepid with years, will keep a mistress, and have the insolence to boast of a thousand vices, which his years, one would think, exempted him from. To be thought *polite*, a man will condemn the too condescending affection of the stupid fool his wife, despise her easy virtue, and at the same time adore an impudent prostitute, who tyrannizes over him, and insults him with impunity; while a lady, for the same reason, (out of *politeness*) will abhor the nauseous fond wretch her husband. Thus a confused notion of *honour* (another word of the same kind, the letters of which I suppose are a kind of talisman) will make a coward go trembling to destruction, and rush with horror into a dreaded eternity!

You will think this a very odd kind of a preamble to be addressed to a bride in all the blooming pride of youth and beauty; but, if you consider that we ought to lay down some principles to secure the continuance of true felicity, you will not think it an inexcusable piece of impertinence in me to put you in mind that, if we would enjoy any solid happiness, we must be contented to dissent from the maxims of the greatest part of mankind. It is certain, that we are governed more by sound than we are generally willing to imagine. But I might have considered, too, that your good sense had undoubtedly directed you to make the same observation. But, let that be as it will,

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I know I am secure of your pardon; for you are now in too happy a situation to be offended at any thing I can say, however common and trifling my thoughts.

To put an end to these grave remarks, I come to mine own affairs: and first, I shall tell you, that I have lately had an interview with Lucius, in which I gave him an opportunity of indulging all the tenderness of his heart; a satisfaction that was procured me by the kind assistance of Amelia. Upon hearing, a few days since, of the necessities of an honest but indigent family, about a mile distant from my aunt's, I resolved to pay them a visit, to indulge some of that sublime pleasure which it is the greatest advantage of a large fortune to procure us. Amelia only was acquainted with this visit; nor did I tell her of it till I was ready to set out, when I desired her to accompany me, to which she instantly consented. We found the unhappy mansion situated at the foot of a hill, surrounded with several inclosures of orchards, pasture grounds, and corn fields: at the entrance leading to the door, was a short walk between two elder hedges, which inclosed a small kitchen garden, with some stacks of hay, and, near the main building, some stables and barns. But every thing was in profound silence; for no human object was near, and nothing to be heard but the warbling songs of the airy choristers, who fluttered amongst the hedges, or sat making their responses from the distant thorny brakes. The solitary stillness of the place, added to the reflection of the business in which I was employed, contributed to render me thoughtful, and I could not help giving some moments to the consideration of the various unavoidable miseries which attend human nature; miseries which neither virtue nor prudence can always guard against. With a mind thus dipped in pity, I could not help hesitating a little when we came to the door; but at last rapping softly, we entered the room, where despair and sorrow were painted in the strongest colours, and in every face such an undissembled sadness, as struck me to the very soul: for, notwithstanding the relief I intended to give them, I could not forbear sharing in the general grief; and, indeed, it was with some pain that I assumed an air of ease and cheerfulness, in order to comfort a pretty boy, who stood with his eyes fixed upon his

mother, and, pulling her by the apron, cried at seeing her weep. Two other children, too young to take the same notice, were playing about the room. But, wherever I turned my eyes, every thing was in disorder; nor was it easy to cross the room, or take a chair, for the confused heap of litter which was every where strewn about. Alas! the poor woman was in too deep affliction to attend to the management of her family; her mind too much discomposed to attend to order and decorum: for a violent distress almost always renders us inactive; it sinks and depresses the spirits; and, when no visible assistance is in view, even makes the unhappy incapable of thinking, or using their natural abilities, in order to extricate themselves from the pressure of their difficulties.

These observations, Madam, I have learned from my aunt, and have always found them agreeable to truth. At one of the windows sat a young man, with despair in his eyes, and a look that discovered he was grown stupid with grief. A book of devotion lay open before him, on which his regards were fixed; but fixed in such a steady manner, as shewed that he was incapable of reading: he pored on the same place, and neither his eyes nor his head moved to take in the compass of a line. As soon as we entered the room, the good woman arose from her chair, and, appearing surprized at the sight of strangers of our appearance, asked our business; when taking the little boy in my arms, I wiped away his tears, and kissing his pretty rosy cheeks, told him I would wipe away his mother's too, if I was able: at this he smiled; when, emptying some lumber out of a chair, while the mother made one ready for Amelia, we both sat down. At a loss how to introduce the cause of our visit, and willing to oblige them in a way as little painful as possible, I seemed mighty fond of the little creatures that were playing around me; then turning to the mother, desired that she would look upon us as her sincerest friends, and that we should think it a pleasure to serve her; but she thanked me in a manner that shewed that her hopes were at a low ebb, and too far sunk to be raised by glimmering prospects and airy visions. However, she called her husband: but, before he came, Amelia arose; and leaving me to comfort the distressed as my humanity directed, elated with the agreeable

agreeable surprize she hoped to give me, went out with the rustick youth, and privately dispatched him to Marilla, to let her know where we were, and that her company, with her brother's, would be acceptable to us both. Mean while the master of the house, with more firmness in his countenance, but with eyes drooping with care, came to us from a back room, and related the cause of his misfortunes with that honest frankness and simplicity which always affects the mind, though uttered in the most plain and homely language. He told me, that by the excessive rains, which had enriched the farmers of the neighbouring hills with several successive years of plenty, he was reduced, from a state of affluence, to penury and indigence; that he should be obliged to sell the plentiful crop that covered his lands to a vast disadvantage, to satisfy his landlord's demands; and that he had no other prospect than to lose the fruit of his labours, to be turned out of all his possessions, and, perhaps, be glad to glean the fields he himself had sown; and all this for want of a small sum which his landlord had now a particular occasion for. Willing to shorten his uneasiness, I here interrupted him, to know what sum would remove his present anxiety; and, as soon as he had informed me, I told him, with a smile, that I thought myself very happy at having it in my power to give joy to an honest family; and at the same time emptied my purse upon the table. I now felt my heart overflow with a sympathetick extasy, arising from the transports I myself had occasioned. Thus, with a little gold that has long laid useless in my chest, and for which I have here no use, I have procured the happiness of a whole family, and given myself a delight more exquisite than I ever experienced from the like occasion; since the advantage they have received from it, as they told me, may probably redound to their children's children. What use could I possibly make of this boarded pelf, to procure me equal satisfaction? Or what is the pleasure we receive from pride, the gratification of a luxurious appetite, or the indulgence of the highest animal delight, compared to this luxury of the mind; the more natural rapture which results from the gratifications of our humanity? But while the good people were loading me with their blessings, I had the agreeable surprize of seeing Amelia enter the room,

accompanied by Lucius and his sister; for, as they lived but at a small distance from the farmer's, she chose to walk softly after the young man, in order to meet them, and to let them know that I was an entire stranger to the visit she requested from them. Seized with a sudden emotion, my heart fluttered with a painful joy, and throbbed with a sweet yet tumultuous extasy. I hastily arose, hardly having the power to stay to desire my old friends to take no notice of what had passed; and running to the door, in an eager transport embraced Marilla, at the same time shooting a glance at her dear brother. We went into the orchard together: we talked like friends who had not seen each other for a long time, full of spirit, full of affection; till at last, after having taken two or three turns, Amelia and Marilla told me, with a laugh, that they would leave me for a few minutes; and instantly striking off to the most distant part of the orchard, seated themselves under a tree, and, by their absence, left room for a more delightful conversation. But though Lucius was now very sensible that he was dear to me, he could not enter upon the tender subject without confusion: he at first enquired after my health; complained that he was denied the pleasure of seeing me; and then, with a sigh, let me know how much he thought himself obliged to Amelia for procuring him a satisfaction he had so long languished for. 'But why, Sir,' said I, willing to draw him to an explanation, 'do you complain of your being deprived of my company; is that such a terrible misfortune?'—'Yes, my dear Felicia,' replied he, trembling, and casting down his eyes, 'it is an insupportable misfortune. Did you but know, Madam, with what anguish I support your absence; with what cruel inquietudes I count the tedious minutes, while my heart—Here he paused, unable to proceed, while every joint quivered with fear; but at last resuming—'while my heart struggles to be near you; were you sensible of that tumult of passion, and all those nameless dear sensations which fill my breast; O Felicia! your wonder would cease, and you would rather be surprized that any consideration could prevent my flying to you!' His embarrassment now seemed to increase, while he waited for my answer; and, indeed, I was going to en-

deavour to railly him on his pretended Platonick friendship; to endeavour, I say, for I am sadly afraid I should have made but an odd appearance with my affected gaiety, for my heart was too much softened to permit me to laugh at him; however, one touching glance changed my resolution, and obliged me to behave more naturally; that is, to thank him for what was so perfectly agreeable to me. 'I am obliged to you, Sir,' said I, 'for that deep concern you express for me; but were I more sensible that I deserved it, I might give greater credit to what you tell me: however, I can do no less than thank you for your complaisance.'— 'Ah! Madam,' returned he with more resolution, while a darting joy flushed in his cheek, and in a moment mingled an air of delight amidst the tender languishment of his countenance, 'your merit sufficiently authorizes the ardour of my passion. I feel the force of your charms; they run through my heart, and captivate every thought: but chiefly that amiable virtue, that sanctity of manners, and all those dear unutterable graces, which perpetually blossom with fresh beauties and undecaying charms, fill my ravished soul, and inspire a tender admiration and distant awe.'

You see, Madam, that these silent lovers (who are struck dumb with a gush of passion too soft and powerful to be expressed) have their tongues no sooner unlocked, than they burst into heroicks, and talk as differently from the polite gentlemen of the more stubborn mould, who have language at command, as if they were another species of beings. Here the heart says every thing, and dictates not only the words, but the minutest glance, and the least motion: every feature has a voice, and the whole man proclaims the power of love. For my part, I freely confess that flattery never appeared half so charming as it did now. A sweet enthusiasm possessed all my soul, and I could not help thinking how much better this dear man deserved a compliment of this kind than myself. But the next thought gave a bitter dash to this exultation of heart, and made me reply, in a mild tone—'You are much to blame to entertain such romantick sentiments of me, which, I assure you, I have not vanity enough to think I deserve; but, however, were I ever so

worthy of your esteem, and tenderest affection, yet the thought that I am not at my own disposal, and the difficulty you may expect to meet with from my father, who has an undoubted right to dispose of me, should make you endeavour to forget me, and conquer a passion which I fear will prove fatal to your repose.' This answer gave an immediate damp to his transport, and seemed to throw him into a fresh confusion: however, fixing his eyes upon me, with a languid yet piercing air—'O my dear Felicia,' cried he, 'do you indeed blame the unconquerable tenderness of my heart? Would you persuade me to erase your lovely image from my soul? Alas! I am too sensible that I have no reason to flatter myself that your father will ever favour my aspiring wishes; yet, whatever is the consequence, I must love you still—I must ever love you. Nor can I, though surrounded with difficulties that oppose my happiness, even wish that I loved you less. But ah! Madam, if you desire that I should forget you, I am wretched indeed!'

With what irresistible softness were these last words uttered! His eyes swelled with a starting tear, which with conscious dignity and shame he endeavoured to call back, as a mark of a too effeminate weakness. Every speaking feature described the strong emotions which agitated his soul with all the torturing agonies that can arise from the tenderest despair; while pity and love, and dear compassion, shot through my heart, and filled all my mind with a virtuous and decent softness. I looked upon him; but what did this look tell him? Certainly all that I felt; for my eyes were then incapable of speaking a falsehood.

'O Lucius!' said I, 'need I tell you, that I am far from wishing it in your power to forget me? Yet, methinks, if that was necessary to your happiness, I could suffer a great deal to procure it; and perhaps a conquest of this kind would not cost me less than it would you. Could you but procure my father's consent, we might both be happy—but that, I fear, you will never obtain. No; neither you nor I ought to hope for it. And I here protest that I will never be yours without his approbation. Not even your merit, great as it is, shall ever make me forget that I have a father—'
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‘ a kind and indulgent father. Never shall any consideration prevail with me to forfeit my duty to God, or to him. This resolution you will not, you cannot condemn.’—‘ No, my dear Felicia,’ returned he, with his eyes sparkling with a languid joy; ‘ my love is too pure to suffer me either to involve you in your father’s displeasure, or to tempt you to offend Heaven: so far from laying snares for your virtue and honour, I would die in their defence, and sacrifice all that is dear to me to preserve them inviolate. But, O what transporting goodness! Do you indeed love me? Is it possible? Help me to support the rapture of this extatick thought—or rather teach me how to merit your father’s favour. What means would I not employ to obtain it! Sure, if he is such a tender father as you describe him, he must have some regard to your inclinations in an affair of such infinite consequence to your happiness. But, O this disproportion of fortune! that is the obstacle. And can there be a greater in the opinion of a tender parent? Yes, sure, to a wife and tender parent there may.’

But, Madam, I must not forget to mention one circumstance that I am sure will make you smile. In the height of his rapture he seized my hand, and squeezing it with a strong and sudden grasp, hurt my fingers so, that I could hardly forbear crying out; I am sure, if he had observed my looks, he would have found that I made most frightful faces: he then pressed it to his lips, and taking it from thence, grasped my poor fingers again with the same convulsion of passion, still slackening the tender pressure as his thoughts returned to my father; he at last held my hand so loose, that my numbed fingers could scarcely feel that he held them at all. But a shame on my extreme insensibility, that gave occasion to these intolerable extasies! What tender words had I uttered! Dear Madam, let no prudes or coquettes ever read my letters, for I shall certainly never be able to stand the censure of the one, or the faillery of the other. But to proceed.

Melting with the high-wrought rapture which seemed to sublime our souls, while it raised us to a degree of felicity almost too exquisite to be supported, we mutually opened our hearts,

and with a confidence of being beloved, reciprocally confessed the tender sensations that swelled our bosoms. All my soul was delight! a delight pure as the rapture of ætherial spirits! his transporting extasy!

‘ ‘Tis not the coarser tie of human laws,
‘ Unnatural oft, and foreign to the mind,
‘ That binds our peace, but harmony itself,
‘ Attuning all our passions into love;
‘ Where friendship full exerts his softest
‘ power;
‘ Perfect esteem and sympathy of soul,
‘ Thought meeting thought, and will pre-
‘ venting will,
‘ With boundless confidence: for nought
‘ but love
‘ Can answer love, and render bliss secure.’

THOMPSON.

But, lost in this charming intercourse of souls, we forgot that it was time to depart; till my cousin, with an unwelcome intrusion, and more unwelcome message, came to put us in mind that the sun was setting, and that it was time to return home; when with reluctant hearts, after bidding a tender adieu, and embracing Marilla, I tore myself from them, and halted back with Amelia to my aunt.

You, I hope, Madam, will excuse the weakness I so freely confess to you: softened by the scene of distress I had just been a witness of, the unexpected presence of my dear Lucius had probably a much greater effect than it would have had, if my mind had not been thus previously intendered. However, nothing can ennoble the soul like a virtuous passion; it inspires a thousand delicacies, a thousand virtues, which, without it, we should certainly have no idea of.

I am, Madam, with my sincerest respects to his lordship, and my most ardent prayers for the continuance of your mutual happiness, your ladyship’s most obedient servant,

FELICIA.

LETTER XIV.

MADAM,

THOUGH your impatience to hear from me is very obliging, yet it lays me under a necessity of entertaining you with abundance of impertinences; but if trifles can entertain, you have no reason to be dissatisfied. Wrapt up in obscurity,

obscurity, I hear nothing of the fate of princes, or the fall of contending nations. I have now no ambition to enquire after such important events: an humble swain engrosses all my attention, though I hardly ever see him. I converse with few besides the people of the groves, who (pretty warblers!) are my constant companions; yet you would have me incessantly writing. Upon my word, Madam, you are quite unreasonable. I can hardly think it possible that a month's silence can give you all this impatience. But your friendship is an excuse that I must admit. I therefore leave the rooks and daws, which with their harsh discordant pipes aid the concert of the warbling linnet, the thrush, the wood-lark, who, prodigal of harmony, run through their wild variety of notes. Nor shall the rosy-breasted robin, emblem of innocence! the mellow bull-finch, or the dying cadence of the high-soaring songster of the sky, nor all the winged choristers who chant their loves, and in 'fluttering courtship pour out their little souls in mellifluous numbers,' prevent my being impatient when you command it.

My mind is now in an unaccountable situation, strangely divided between hope and fear, and tossed with a variety of contending passions. Still teased with the addresses of Mellifont, his company becomes every day more insupportable; his vanity grows insufferable; and the very means he employs to insinuate himself into my esteem, heightens my aversion. Not that he is really a disagreeable companion; but while he is a perpetual obstacle to my seeing Lucius, it is no wonder if his gayest flights, humorous and diverting as they may appear to others, only serve to increase my spleen and heighten my disgust. The consideration that his unwelcome intrusion deprives me of that dear and softening pleasure I should otherwise enjoy from the cordial glances, and all the pleasing intercourses of love that might pass between Lucius and me, poisons the satisfaction I should otherwise receive from his sprightly airs; airs that have not the least conformity with the tenderly pensive disposition of my mind.

One day last week being disturbed with abundance of gloomy reflections, all turning upon the absence of my lover, and the opposition I expect to meet with from my father, Mellifont glided into

the room with a dancing step and his usual assurance, and an affectation of all that ease and negligence of behaviour, that can only spring from a mind entirely satisfied with itself. He sung *Rosy Bowers*, hummed an Italian air, and every minute digressed from the song, either to make an application to me; or to utter some tender thing which intruded upon his thoughts; but every thing was expressed with such a mixture of the soft and the ridiculous, as would have forced a smile from any one that had less reason to be melancholy. But I was too perverse to be moved by his fantastick behaviour, to shew, even by my looks, the least mark of approbation.

Deaf to the musick of his voice, which is really very harmonious, and untouched by all his arts to charm me, he insensibly became more grave; when laying aside his frolick airs—'Will nothing satisfy you, my charmer,' said he, 'unless you see me sighing at your feet? Would you have me in dull languishment admire your beauties, and with a heavy sobbing heart tell you all my pain? Well, Madam, I confess myself your slave; but at the same time beg, that, cruel as you are, you will not triumph in your conquest, and insult over the victim of your charms.'

Here he threw himself upon his knee, and taking one of my hands, which he tenderly pressed in his—'See, my dear,' said he, 'as great a conquest as ever love has made. In vain I have struggled to regain my liberty. All my wishes center in you; I love you with all the passionate softness that can fill a human breast: as tenderly as—as—' Nay, Madam, for Heaven's sake, don't laugh at me,' continued he, seeing me smile; 'but tell me sincerely now, don't I look very silly? I sigh like the famed knight-errants of old, and like them bending before the divine object of my sublimest wishes, beg, O thou adorable fair! that thou wilt mitigate the severity of my unhappy destiny, or suffer me to expire at thy feet.' Here making a pause, he gently sunk his head upon my lap; when snatching away my hand, and precipitately rising, he could not prevent his falling upon the floor. Not all my melancholy could now prevent my laughing, had I not endeavoured to hinder it, in order to carry on this comick scene. 'Lie there,' cried I, 'thou unworthy knight, nor ever more appear





'pear before me, till thou bringest me
' the heads of those savage monsters that
' infest the woods, the trophies of thy
' prowess and renown.' At this I flung
out of the room, as if in a mighty pas-
sion; and stepping into the thickest part
of the garden, indulged for a few mi-
nutes the burst of laughter which I
with difficulty restrained till I was out
of his hearing.

How dreadfully afraid is poor Mel-
lifont of my abusing the power I have
over him! He was just dissolving in soft-
ness; but in the moment when he was
giving way to his passion, and throw-
ing aside his sprightliness, which was
now become unnatural, a smile recalled
back his fears; his dread of my tyranny
returned; and, to prevent my taking ad-
vantage of his weakness, he was willing
to turn all he had said into ridicule.

However, when I began to reflect a
little, I could not help being afraid that
I had affronted him by my ill-manners
in leaving him so abruptly; and there-
fore, having now been near an hour in
the garden, and imagining he was gone,
returned to my aunt, in order to make
my excuses to her; to whom I fancied
he had complained, and who, probably,
would blame me for carrying the jest too
far. But in my way, stepping into the
room where I had left him upon the
floor, I found my doughty knight
strutting about with an old rusty helmet
on his head, and in his hand a pike,
which served for a spear, upon which
was fixed the head of a fox, which he
had luckily run down the day before.
When stamping with his foot, his trusty
squire entered with the stuffed skins of
several badgers, and other beasts of prey,
the spoils of his hall; when Mellifont
bending one knee, laid them at my feet,
and resting upon his spear—' See, fair
' princess,' said he, bowing low his
head, ' a knight renowned for acts of
' chivalry, who lays at your divine feet
' the ravagers of the mountains and the
' vallies; but lower still he would lay
' his heart. Incomparable lady, you
' see a slave whose magnanimous arm
' has made these horrid monsters trem-
' ble; yet his life depends on the radi-
' ance of your smiles. Soften then with
' pity the beams of your eyes, lest their
' lightning, with too refulgent glory,
' should burn his shrivelled heart to
' cinders.'

This set speech, which he uttered with
the utmost gravity and solemnity, he had
doubtless studied before I entered the
room, and which he concluded with
bending low to kiss my feet: when
struggling against a smile, I assumed
an air of inexorable sternness, and look-
ing down upon him with a lofty supe-
riority and contempt—' Avaunt, caitif
' vile,' cried I, ' and think not to abuse
' my ears with thy audacious forgeries.
' Are these, wretch, the trophies of thy
' valour! Where are the distressed vir-
' gins that thou hast delivered from the
' poisonous talons of fiery dragons, or
' the dreadful gripe of monstrous gi-
' ants? Fly, coward, and attempt not
' to abuse my credulity with the car-
' cases of insects, or my weak arm shall
' chastise thy temerity!' Here I turned
hastily from him, and walking with a
majestick stateliness, seated myself at the
other end of the room, in an easy chair,
with as much dignity as if it had been a
chair of state. But I had no sooner
turned my back, than throwing away
his masking ornaments, he stepped up
to me, singing "Why do you fly, my
" dearest?" and immediately dropping
his song—' Don't you think, Madam,'
cried he, ' that we have acted our parts
' to perfection? Upon my word, you do
' every thing with a grace. Your every
' air is charming. I only am defective;
' for I find I shall do no wonders in the
' character of a redoubted champion for
' love; since, after all my endeavours, I
' have been shamefully degraded, and
' cast from the dignity of my sublime
' station. Yet, Madam, you are sen-
' sible it was in disguise that you made
' me a convert to love. Adorned like
' Flora with all the blooming graces of
' the smiling year, and incircled with
' the united fragrance of every opening
' flower, you captivated all my senses,
' and instantly made me that odd crea-
' ture called a whining, sighing lover.
' Upon my word, Madam, you could
' not have made a stranger metamor-
' phosis had you fixed me a statue.'
Here he paused; but instantly recollect-
ing himself—' O-Madam,' cried he,
smiling and rubbing his hands, ' I have
' a lucky thought; permit me to assume
' another disguise: as you first appeared
' to me a goddess, let me for once be
' disguised like a god; you shall receive
' me crowned with ivy, and the glow-
' ing

ing cluster of the swelling vine. In this appearance who knows what wonders I may perform! Besides, can any thing better express the felicity that would, I am sure, arise from our union, than an emblem of that paradise, where the soft beauties of the opening year shall be blended with the yellow fruits of autumn, and all the charms of the luxuriant flowing bowl! In what exquisite happiness shall we spend our days! you ever blooming; I, like Bacchus, ever frolick, gay, and sprightly!

'No, no, Sir,' said I, 'the seasons may take their course for me; nor will I have any thing to do with your drunken godship. I therefore beg it as a favour, that I may not be disturbed with such fooleries, which are very disagreeable to me.' I had hardly uttered these words, when, with the utmost surprize, I saw Lucius and Marilla enter the room; but it was a surprize accompanied with delight. I viewed his looks with conscious innocence, while no suspecting fear dimmed his eyes, nor was jealousy discoloured his cheek. While I was embracing Marilla, Lucius and Mellifont met each other with the freedom of persons who had been long acquainted; and turning to me—'I have heard,' said he, 'that you are to have a little diversion; and if it is not over, would be glad to have a part in it.' 'Hail! noble knight,' cried he, clapping Mellifont on the shoulder, 'what mighty feat of arms is to be done with your helmet and lance?' Mellifont seemed here a little confused, while I began to fear that my lover was acquainted with the passion of his rival; but examining again his countenance, my uneasiness vanished, for it had not the least tincture of disorder. But finding that Mellifont made no reply, 'Come, my friend, no evasions,' rejoined he; 'I met your servant an hour ago running home with all possible speed, and in such haste that he had hardly time to tell me the whimsical message you had given him, to strip your hall of it's grim ornaments, and to bring them here with those rusty pieces of ancient heroism, your helmet and lance. And the lady of this house, doing my sister and I the honour to desire our company, I came filled with the hopes of seeing some of your diverting extravagancies.'

Here Mellifont, assuming a chearful air, began the relation of the odd piece of Quixotism which he had carried on with such humour; and my aunt and Amelia coming in, could not help joining with Lucius and Marilla in frequently interrupting him, by bursting into a general laugh; and indeed it was impossible for any one in the company to forbear: for though the story was comical enough of itself, yet the severe manner in which he lashed himself, with the romantick reflections he made upon his disgrace, rendered it infinitely more extravagant. Nor indeed is it possible to give you any idea of this part of our diversion, except I could give you the varied tone of his voice, his looks, his air, and his minutest gesture.

The evening was spent with abundance of gaiety, while Lucius's good sense, and Mellifont's agreeable vivacity, furnished a great part of our entertainment. Nor were some of those soft and refined pleasures wanting, which I now find make up the most exquisite part of human happiness. 'Tis true, I could not enter into a particular conversation with my lover, much less indulge the innocent satisfaction of a private interview; but yet I sat near him, and methought my heart beat in that situation much more freely than when he was far distant. My soul itself was all harmony! and, inspired by his presence, every vein was harmony too. Strange! that the mind can be sensible of such delight from only a consciousness of a dear object's being near! What magnetick influence, what attractive power, is in the person beloved, that from a circumstance so small can inspire such tender joys, such delicate sensibilities of happiness! 'Tis true, I saw him with pleasure, I heard him with pleasure too; but yet I had an additional delight, more constant and uniform, from my being conscious that I was near him, which every seat farther from him would have sensibly decreased. You, Madam, can perhaps account for these pleasing emotions; and I desire you would let me know if you think it unreasonable, that upon these occasions there should be some secret sympathies, some dear inexpressible ways, by which souls expand themselves towards the dear person, and join in a soft ethereal embrace. I know you will laugh at this whimsical conceit; but no matter. The evening, I say,

was spent agreeably, though we were obliged to be very cautious in our looks, to prevent suspicion; and indeed I was quite sparing in mine, for I seldom indulged the pleasure of examining his countenance; a precaution that was now absolutely necessary. However, might I frequently enjoy Lucius's company in the same manner, I should be more contented; but hardly ever to see him, and at the same time to have no prospect of having the difficulties removed which obstruct this happiness, I freely confess is more than I am well able to bear. I am afraid of having our mutual passion discovered, I tremble with the most dreadful apprehensions for fear it should come to my father's ears; and yet, without this should be the case, it will for ever continue impossible for me to taste any true felicity.

O my dear friend, if my happiness is really dear to you, give me your advice, and teach me if possible to unite my duty to my father with the tender sentiments I feel for Lucius, and to make them both subservient to the highest pleasure I can enjoy on earth. By what means shall I attack my father's heart? By what means shall Lucius procure his favour, and make him sensible of his merit? To effect this will be a task hard and difficult; and to have a share in promoting my happiness, will be an employment worthy of your friendship, and the most endearing proof you can possibly give me of your esteem and affection. With the sincerest and most tender respect, I am your ladyship's most obedient servant,

FELICIA.

LETTER XV.

IS it possible, Madam, that you can really give me such advice? What, to forget my dear father! to steel my heart against the soft impressions of filial duty! to be insensible of the strong and tender ties of nature, of the affectionate cares his heart has felt for me, and all those numberless instances of paternal kindness which I have so often received from him! Shall I throw a cloud over the flattering prospects he has raised for me, and disappoint all his fond views for my happiness, by casting off that right which nature, and the much more prevailing force of tenderness and love,

have given him over me! No, Madam, I shall never be guilty of such ingratitude. I will never dispose of myself without his consent; nor shall all your arguments, how plausible soever, prevail with me to give him a minute's uneasiness.

Pardon the freedom with which I reject your proposal; you never knew what it was to have parents, and therefore can have but faint ideas of that solicitude, that unwearied concern, which employ their thoughts; much less can you be sensible of the unspeakable obligations I am under to mine, the best of parents, and the best of fathers! But sure I am mistaken: you must have very strong ideas of paternal tenderness, to say, that however offended he may be at first, affection will soon take place of resentment, and at last swallow up all thought of displeasure; when his eyes will be open to the merits of Lucius, and he may possibly be brought even to approve of our union; a reconciliation which you kindly promise to use your utmost endeavour to procure for us. But, ah! my dear friend! can I presume on that affection which makes him dear to me? Can I offend him, from the thought that he is far from deserving such usage from me? And can I disclaim his authority and counsel, from the reflection that he deserves all my confidence, and my most grateful and affectionate regards? No, my dear, you must excuse me, your friendship blinds your judgment, and makes you give me advice that you would be far from taking yourself, were you in my circumstances. You would then have considered the vexation that must arise from a disappointment of the fondest hopes; the just provocation of seeing goodness abused, and the painful mixture of anger and love, arising in the mind of an indulgent father, as the greatest evils: nor could you, I am sure, think of being the cause of all these dreadful perturbations without starting back, and instantly recoiling into duty.

Your ladyship finds now what a troublesome persecution your kindness brings upon you: instead of acknowledging your goodness, and thanking you for the obliging concern you express for my happiness, I have been haranguing for I don't know how long on my duty to my ever-honoured papa, in order to let you see what a good girl

G

I am.

I am. But don't be offended, Madam; I have only been anticipating your own thoughts on the rights of parents. You will soon be of my mind; and a few months hence, I hope, will be able to write on this subject with a much better grace than I can pretend to do; since you will then, it is likely, find abundance of those tender cares, those dear undescribable solitudes arising in your heart, which I form but a distant idea of, from the impressions I have received from the paternal affection of one of the best of fathers.

The generous pity you express for Mellifont, proceeds undoubtedly from your humanity and natural goodness; but I find this pity does not deprive you of the pleasure of diverting yourself with the oddness of his behaviour, and the ridiculous manner in which he pays me his addresses: but I am going to surprize you, by letting you see that he is no longer to be pitied, since he is in a fair way of regaining his liberty, or at least of falling into a more supportable bondage.

If you remember, Madam, I gave you in one of my letters an account of the concealed passion Amelia entertained for this gay spark of mine; but, hopeless as it then appeared, the engaging softness of her behaviour, and the natural sweetness of her disposition, added to that easy, unaffected freedom, and artless innocence, which attends every thing she does, seem at length to have made an impression on him. But you could never guess from whom I received this news—from Lucius, Madam. He made his rival his confidant. And here follows the letter I have just received from him on this occasion.

‘ LOVELY FELICIA,

‘ **D**ELIGHTFUL as the reflection of your goodness is, while I indulge the transporting remembrance of that charming air with which you frankly confessed the tender regard you should always have for my happiness—You love! you return my passion! what an extatick thought! yet it cannot enable me to support the tedious delay, the painful absence, the torturing suspense, and the pleasing yet dreadful mixture of hope and fear with which I wait to know that sentence from your father, which must confirm me blest beyond expression,

‘ or throw the thickest gloom over all my joys. O, my dear, with what ardour do I long to see you! I have a thousand things to say.

‘ Yesterday my friend Mellifont came to see me, with an air more thoughtful than seemed consistent with his sprightly volatile temper; when our friendship, which began very early, and which, upon his late return from the tour of Europe, has been revived with all its warmth, engaged me to press him to communicate the cause of his discontent. He told me that was the design of his visit; and proposing our going into my study, where we might be secure from interruption, began there a story which filled my mind with every wild agitation. “It is with shame,” said he, “that I confess my weakness; I love Felicia.” O what a stab did these words give me! His wealth, his form, his wit, his humour, with every qualification capable of charming the fair, rushed upon my mind, and gave me the first pangs of jealousy, tormenting passion! But recollecting that he was certainly ignorant of my being his rival, I endeavoured to arm myself with patience. He then enumerated your several perfections, and dwelt upon your charms, while every commendation increased my disquiet. O Madam, can you forgive my unjust fears? fears injurious to your honour! But while I made the comparison between him and myself, how was it possible to help being alarmed, since I myself must have justified your choice in rejecting me for him? But these fears were short-lived and transient, they soon gave way to a healing joy which composed the impetuous tumult of my soul; and with the utmost delight I heard him add—“Yet you would admire, Lucius, to see how cold, how insensible she is of all my endeavours to please her. I meet with nothing but perfect indifference. Her very looks speak her insensibility. Ah! had she but half the winning softness, the tender graces, of Amelia!—but she is incapable of softness. But don't you think Amelia pretty near as beautiful as Felicia? It must be confessed, however, that this lady has a much more agreeable temper. What a pleasing air! what a charming simplicity! Don't you think it would

“ pique

" pique Felicia's pride to see me change
 " the object of my homage, and pay
 " those assiduous addresses to her cou-
 " sin, which she with so much scorn
 " contemns? It is a pleasant thought;
 " and I am resolved to punish this
 " haughty beauty, by letting her see,
 " that it is now out of her power to
 " render me that whining ridiculous
 " fellow she endeavours to make me.
 " Tell me now, Lucius; am I not in
 " the right?"—"They are both ladies
 " of extraordinary merit," replied I,
 " with the utmost calmness; " but you
 " ought not to impute Felicia's dis-
 " like to a want of natural goodness.
 " Pray, Mellifont, is it such a crime to
 " be blind to your perfections? She
 " would doubtless approve of you as a
 " friend, though not as a lover: and I
 " think I know her well enough to af-
 " firm that, so far from being offended
 " at your transferring your affections
 " to her cousin, she will use her endea-
 " vours to promote your mutual felici-
 " ty."—"Do you think so?" re-
 " turned he; " then I am resolved to try
 " the experiment. I have found some-
 " thing so engaging in Amelia's beha-
 " viour, while I paid my addresses to
 " her cousin, that I have long looked
 " upon her with the highest esteem.
 " She pleases without design; and does
 " the most trifling actions with such a
 " grace, that they forcibly insinuate
 " themselves into the heart. It is, I
 " am sure, in her power to make me
 " happy." I endeavoured to fix this
 " resolution; and, after several other
 " things being said on the same subject,
 " he took leave, with a firm intention, of
 " transferring all his tender sentiments
 " to Amelia.
 " O, my dear Felicia! tell me what I
 " must think of myself for this beha-
 " viour? What judgment will you form
 " of it? Sure it cannot offend you!
 " You are too artless to dissemble either
 " with him or me. But, however, I
 " beg to see you; and, with the most af-
 " fectionate ardour, intreat you to give
 " me an opportunity of expressing my
 " gratitude, and telling you how much
 " I am, dearest creature! your obliged
 " and affectionate servant,

" LUCIUS."

As soon as I had read this letter, I
 left my chamber, and made haste to com-
 municate it to Amelia, who I did not

question would be highly pleased with
 the contents; but, to my no small sur-
 prize, as well as satisfaction, I found her
 engaged in a close conversation with
 Mellifont: so returning to my apart-
 ment, scrawled over the above, in order
 to send it away by this night's post. I
 have hardly time now to thank you in form
 for your many favours; and therefore,
 with my affectionate prayers for the un-
 interrupted continuance of your felicity,
 I in haste subscribe myself, your lady-
 ship's most obliged friend,

FELICIA.

LETTER XVI.

LAST week, my dear friend, Fin-
 formed you that the gay and janty
 Mellifont, finding himself unable, with
 all his airs, to ingratiate himself so far
 into my esteem, as to prevail with me to
 listen with pleasure to his addresses, was
 so poor a hero as to change his mistress,
 and direct his smiles and sighs to Ame-
 lia; a thing which, however common
 in real life, is seldom or never heard
 of in romance: yet this instance of
 his prudence, so far from alarming my
 pride, is a constant source of satisfaction
 and joy. And if you have yet read over
 my letter, you must have observed, too,
 that I told you I left them together
 while I wrote you an account of this
 change in my affairs.

As soon as he was gone, Amelia came
 running to my chamber with her eyes
 sparkling with joy, and an air of the ut-
 most satisfaction. "What do you think,
 ' my dear!' cried she, as soon as she en-
 ' tered the room; ' the engaging Melli-
 ' font has been saying some of the most
 ' agreeable, tender things, to me. O, he
 ' is a charming man! He came to-day,
 ' as usual; when thinking that it was to
 ' you we owed his visit, I told him I
 ' would let you know that he was here,
 ' at the same time turned in order to go
 ' and seek for you, but he prevented me.
 ' He took hold of my hand, and desiring
 ' me to stay, said that his business was
 ' now with me. I went with him into
 ' the parlour; when seating himself by
 ' me, with such a soft look as I have
 ' sometimes seen him fix upon you—"I
 ' know, Madam," said he, "you will
 ' be surprized at what I am going to
 ' say to you. Felicia's rigour, and
 ' your charms, have cured my passion

“for her. I have been unable to support that lady’s constant indifference, and am not of a temper to indulge a softness that can be of no service to me. I will never be the dupe of a girl’s vanity, nor whine in doleful ditty the dismal story of despairing love. I am resolved to be happy; and would have you observe, that it is out of the power of any of your fair sex to make me miserable.” This, Madam, continued Amelia, was to prevent my using him as you have done; for he immediately added so many agreeable compliments, and such strong protestations of the sincerity of his love, that I could never be weary of hearing him. O he is a charming man! This change is happy for us both; is it not, Madam? I dare say, he is perfectly sincere.”

Here Amelia took time to breathe; for her extasy had carried her on with such rapidity, that, in the exultation of her heart, she hardly knew how to give a moment’s truce to her transport. Her whole soul overflowed with joy; and it overflowed so fast, that her utterance could hardly keep pace with the swift course of her ideas. The most trifling word had the air of rapture, and every sentence the dignity of triumph.

However, she no sooner gave me leave to speak, than embracing her with much affection—“Yes, my dear,” cried I, smiling, “this revolution is happy for us both, and I sincerely congratulate you on the conquest of a heart that has so long been dear to you. Lucius has lost a rival that he had reason to fear, and I have no longer the dread of obliging my father by refusing to marry a gentleman I cannot love: but I have yet no prospect of his ever giving Lucius his consent, that is as far off as ever; while you, who yesterday were ready to envy the poor felicity I enjoyed of having my almost hopeless passion returned, have in a moment obtained your wishes. My aunt will approve your mutual tenderness, and in a few days cement your happy union. How vastly is your happiness superior to mine!”—“O, my dear Felicia!” returned she again, “can’t you rejoice with me without these bitter reflections? Expect the same delightful turn in your affairs, and depend upon my assistance in procuring it. A father’s compliance is not sure

so hard to obtain, when the felicity of a dear and only child is at stake. Let us communicate every thing to Lucius. I will engage my mamma, as soon as possible, to take us with her to pay his mother and Marilla a visit. We shall find him at home. He shall know he has had a rival, and we will tell him the reason of it’s being kept so long a secret.”—“He knows already the state of our affairs,” replied I, “and had acquainted me with them before you knew your own happiness. Here are a few lines that I received from him on this subject, just after I rose from dinner.”

At this she took the letter out of my hand with an eager surprize; her face was covered with a modest blush, which discovered some confusion; and her eyes were in a moment glewed to the paper, which seemed to renew her joy. She read it over several times, and seemed to dwell with extasy on that part which related the conversation between my lover and Mellifont; but at last returning it—“This is a proof,” cried she, with a fresh kindling satisfaction in her looks, “that he is sincere in his professions. It is not a rash hasty fit of disgust that makes him fly to me: he has examined his heart; he consults his friend; he loves me almost as well as I do him. This authorizes the delight I feel, and proves that I have not been mistaken in thinking him sincere. He has fixed his choice, and I shall be happy!”

These words were inspired by a transport that made her exalt her voice much above her usual manner of speaking; so that my aunt, who was entering the room at the same time, heard her very distinctly. We both saw her in the same moment, and both were under some confusion at this unexpected interruption, since we could not guess how much she had overheard of what we were unwilling to inform her of. However, this disorder was very short; for she came forwards with a smile, accompanied with an air that had not the least mark of displeasure. “Heigh-day!” cried she, with her eyes alternately fixed upon her daughter and me, “what is the matter, pray? What! all in raptures? May not your mother, Amelia, partake of your satisfaction? I am come to claim a share in your confidence, and to desire you would let me know Mellifont’s

font's business with you to-day, and the substance of that long conversation you had together. Come, be free, my dear, and tell me all.'

Here I found that she was still ignorant of Lucius's passion; when observing that Amelia cast down her eyes, and, with a visible disorder, hesitated how to reply, I instantly removed her embarrassment. 'O Madam,' said I, 'we have strange things to tell you! Mellifont, finding my heart too flinty to be softened by all his endeavours, has shook off my chains,—and seeks for happiness from the more gentle disposition of Amelia's soul. While paying his addresses to me, he discovered a thousand charms in her; and therefore, wisely consulting his own happiness, has changed the object of a hopeless passion for one who he has reason to flatter himself will prove more favourable; and I dare say, Madam, since you approved of his being your nephew, you will be not less willing he should be your son.'—'No, child,' returned she; 'so far from having any objections to him, I freely confess that I shall be proud of his alliance. But are you sure that he is sincere in his pretensions? Inferior as Amelia's fortune will be to his, I should highly resent my daughter's being made a property of. This is perhaps only an artifice by which he hopes to awaken your jealousy.'—'My jealousy, Madam!' cried I, with some warmth; 'no, he never could have the vanity to think it. I dare say he is in earnest; and, so far from being offended at his preferring my cousin to me, I rejoice in his change, and look upon it with a peculiar satisfaction.'—'Well, whatever is his design,' rejoined my aunt, 'a little time will discover it. However, Felicia, I would have you believe, that I am not much less concerned for your happiness than I am for Amelia's: you are both very dear to me; but your affections are perhaps already engaged.' Here I blushed in my turn, which I fancy she took notice of; for, after a short pause, she only added—'But it is not my business to examine you on this subject, though I should be very glad to have a share in your confidence. As for you, Amelia, I hope you won't scruple to discover to me the situation of your heart. You know I am too ten-

der a mother not to consult your inclinations as well as my own.' These last words were expressed in a most moving tone; while my cousin, who had been hitherto silent, could not conceal the rising tear, which with mute eloquence expressed her gratitude, and thanked her for her indulgent goodness: when starting up, she sprung into her arms, and gave her a feeling embrace; which the fond mother, with conscious happiness in her looks, returned with equal ardour.

You cannot conceive, Madam, how much I was affected with the goodness of the parent, and the confidence which it immediately produced in the mind of the child. Amelia, dissolved in filial tenderness, acknowledged her regard for Mellifont; while my aunt approved her passion—approved it with an air of joy, though still doubting the sincerity of his pretensions—when, to remove her scruples, my cousin promised to make her a judge, by giving her an account of his future behaviour.

I was all this while a stupid observer, and was almost ashamed not to have a share in these pleasing caresses. 'Do I indulge a passion,' said I to myself, 'that I am afraid of acknowledging to a person so well worthy of all my confidence? Will a lady that has so much consideration for her daughter as to tell her that she is too tender a parent not to consult her child's inclinations rather than her own; a woman that is such an excellent judge of real merit; be insensible of the perfections of my dear Lucius, and disapprove of my passion for so valuable, so worthy a man; one whom she treats with so much respect, and on whose virtue, strong sense, and other valuable accomplishments, I have heard her make so many encomiums? I can't believe it. She will be pleased, too, with my confidence, approve my discernment, and give me her assistance to work upon my father.' Well, then, I will boldly confess my tender sentiments for this engaging youth; and, unruffled at the smallness of his estate, will plead the cause of virtue against that of wealth; I will gain her over by my respectful confidence, work upon her pity, and engage her to give us her friendly assistance, her compassionate and endearing advice.'

This was my final resolution: but though

though I had no reason to prevent my putting it in execution, yet I no sooner attempted to open my lips upon this too interesting subject, than my courage failed; my heart with soft and fluttering timidity rebelled against the dictates of reason; a thousand scruples instantly arose; I blushed; conscious shame held fast my tongue; the first word died upon my lips; my confidence vanished; and I found the words, *I love*, so hard to be uttered, that I was forced in spite of myself to continue silent, and leave unattempted the too softening confession; while all the advantages I so reasonably expected from her assistance were unable to surmount the weakness I laboured under. What a painful perplexed situation was this! and how hard is it for a virtuous mind to prevent that shame, which ought only to accompany vice, from attending the most laudable passions! The mind, enfeebled by custom, is taught to regard that as a weakness which is its highest perfection; nor is it strange that the most honourable and decent love should be accompanied with a modest reluctant shame, since we are taught to blush at being discovered in the practice of the noblest and most sublime virtues.

My aunt did not stay long: softened by her own affection, and the tenderness of her daughter, she left us with all that satisfaction in her looks that could arise from the contemplation of the felicity of her child; when the perturbation of my mind, occasioned by the struggle between my diffidence and reason, insensibly dispersed, and at last left me at leisure calmly to sympathise in the happiness of my friends. Hope now gains the ascendant in my mind; and the indulgence of this good mother makes me flatter myself with the same from a father, no less affectionately concerned for my interest.

With my sincerest respects to his lordship, I am, Madam, with all possible affection, yours, &c.

FELICIA.

LETTER XVII.

MADAM,

IT is not without the appearance of reason that you are surprized at the unaccountable manner in which we dispose of our hearts; but if we look around

us, we shall find cause to vindicate the grave, the sedate, and tranquil Amelia, for loving a person of a temper so widely different from her own. It is not always a resemblance of ourselves in temper, any more than in features, that constitutes the strongest attractive: on the contrary, the thoughtful mind, conscious of its own incapacity to render itself happy, is naturally charmed with one whose airy sprightliness is best adapted to give it relief, and vary its pleasures by inspiring the delightful relaxations of the more lively social enjoyments; while the vivacious volatile temper expects the same satisfaction from the sagacious and more sober reflections of solid thought and decent prudence. Thus we frequently find that a contrast of this kind gives a variety which adds a poignancy to their joys, while those whose souls nature seems to have formed in the same mould, too often drag on a dull insipid life, or trifle it away with a mixture of alternate levity and spleen. Yet, after all, it must be confessed, that however various their tempers, it is absolutely necessary there should be a conformity, at least, of passion and sentiment.

Methinks I write now with the gravity of a philosopher; and that, in accounting for Amelia's tenderness for Mellifont, I have very handsomely apologized for that of your trifling friend for the grave and learned Lucius.

Yesterday being the time we had appointed to pay Marilla's mother a visit, my aunt, Amelia, and I, set out on foot, as soon as we had dined, after having given orders for the coach to fetch us back in the evening. The day was exceeding fine; and the air rendered cool and refreshing by a gentle breeze, which just waved the yellow corn, that opening in a narrow path, gave us an easy and delightful passage; while the bearded ears hung their heavy heads surcharged with myriads of glittering pearls, the fruits of a hasty shower which, before we had set out, had refreshed the earth, and embalmed the air with a fragrance infinitely more pleasing than that which arises from the powdered toupée of an accomplished beau, or the odours which scent your ladyship's gloves. A thousand clouds with intermingled gold and purple, of various lights and shades, adorned the wide, the blue expanse, or dimmed the too ardent rays of the dazzling

zling sun; while the insatiate eye greedily surveyed the wide-stretched plenty, or the distant woods embrowned by Autumn, or glowing with a lengthened verdure of various hues. Here friendly chat and innocent gaiety kept up our spirits, deluded away the time, and helped to increase the tender joy which glowed in my bosom at every thought of my speedily seeing Lucius. I saw the farmer, to whom I had given so seasonable a relief, with honest front giving orders to his servants. My heart sprung again with a bounding joy; I found myself in the fields I had preserved in his possession, and felt more charms in the great abundance that surrounded me, from the reflection of it's contributing to the advancement of an honest, though unfortunate family, than the most rapacious miser in viewing his hoarded treasures. He perceived me; when, with an humble scrape and grateful look, he silently expressed his acknowledgments.

At last we arrived at the end of our walk; when, as Marilla had been privately acquainted the night before with our intended visit, we were sure to find Lucius at home: they both met us at the gate, accompanied by their mother, where they all with glowing extasy paid us their compliments, and conducted us into a neat and well-finished parlour. Here we took some refreshment; which being over, Amelia judging by her own heart that I should be glad of an opportunity of a separate conversation, asked me with a smile, if I was not too weary with my walk, to take a turn with her in the garden; while Lucius and Marilla, with a sparkling intelligent kind of satisfaction in their looks, offered their service to accompany us.

Here we had a most tender interview; I explained the reason of my conduct in concealing from him the addresses of Mellifont, and thanked him for the assistance he had given me in sparing me the trouble of being any longer teased by his importunities. We then consulted how to procure my father's consent; but had come to no determination, when we were interrupted by my aunt, whom we saw coming down the alley to meet us. However, she did not discover much surprise at seeing us together without our companions, who we immediately told her were gone to gather some fruit, which indeed was the excuse they had made use

of in leaving us: but we had hardly made this apology for their absence, when we perceived them returning; and my aunt telling us that she was afraid we should fatigue ourselves too much, desired we would walk in. We consented, and immediately followed her.

Sophronia, Lucius's mother, entertained me with all that ease and polite freedom which is natural to a well-bred woman; and the part she bore in the conversation sufficiently discovered her good sense, and the delicacy and justness of her sentiments, while an air of sweetness gave a grace to every thing she said. We were entertained with several subjects, without the least connection, most of which were very trifling; but at last, the clergy being mentioned, and several smart stories told of the jocular manner in which the worthy vicar of a neighbouring parish conferred the greatest benefits, we insensibly became interested in the subject. From the clergy we digressed to religion, an easy transition: when some of the errors of Christians, sanctified by the venerable name of Orthodoxy, were proved inconsistent with reason, with all our ideas of moral beauty and natural harmony; with all those engaging portraits of the Deity; with the swell of humanity which expands our bosoms, refines our ideas, and makes us partake of the divine pleasures of beneficence and conscious virtue; with the kindly impression we every where receive from a view of Nature, equally lovely in all her works, and equally conspiring to an universal happiness; and, in short, with the plainest discoveries of that revelation which we acknowledge to be divine. 'Man, the noblest part of this lower creation,' said Lucius, 'is sunk from the dignity of his being, and represented as naturally incapable of pleasing, by his best actions, his kind and benevolent Maker. What a reflection on the divine Artificer! Our very virtues are crimes, and the most perfect use of all our powers merits no other reward than eternal damnation! What a preposterous opinion, to think of pleasing the Creator by degrading his works! So far from having any moral sense, any in-wrought love of virtue, we are,' say they, 'formed with a thousand propensities to vice; and there is not a crime which ever was committed, but what lurks in the breast of every man, as he is formed by nature,

ture, and to which he is particularly inclined. If this be the case, a manly action and a villainous one are synonymous terms; and to say a person behaves like a man, is to say, he is a sodomite, a murderer, a parricide; and what, if possible, is a greater contradiction still, it is to say, that he is to the last degree penurious and extravagant; that he destroys himself by debauchery, and yet pines away for want: in short, that he acts from vicious principles so opposite, that they must necessarily destroy each other. Sentiments that in themselves are not more monstrous, than inconsistent with experience, and every dictate of reason and common sense. But the beneficent Father of the universe, whose invariable goodness is infinite and boundless, has been so far from cursing his offspring by inspiring them with such baleful envenomed dispositions, that he has strongly connected, by the very frame of our minds, vice and cruelty with hate, shame and horror; virtue, with a thousand charms, a thousand lovely attractives. Supreme and unrivalled in glory, and glowing with a conscious sense of his own matchless, unfading felicity, he creates to communicate happiness, and forms a wondrous scale of beings, widely to extend the glorious emanations of his goodness. He makes it their duty to be happy; and the glory of each individual, like him, to diffuse happiness around him. He places them in a state of trial, with every tender social affection in their hearts, to struggle with each selfish thought, and gives a ray of his wisdom to direct in what manner to exercise the particular exertions of these intendering dispositions. What a subject for gratitude; for the most devout, the most humble and elevated piety! This is the religion of Nature; the generous, the friendly religion of the Bible: that one invariable religion, which will ever be a law to every species of moral and accountable beings, from men up to the highest order of celestial spirits.

Nor can there be a religion, I could not help interrupting, that gives us more exalted sentiments of the Deity. What surprising munificence! The noblest pleasures that can swell our minds, are those which accompany the practice of virtue; and yet, exquisite as these

delights are, they are only a prelude to diviner raptures; they refine the soul, and fit us for that state of being where our joys shall be unmixed with care, and uninterrupted by the struggle of contending passions; where friendship and gratitude shall be refined into the purest extasies, and every social affection attune the soul into the most perfect harmony! Delightful thought! how lovely is the Deity, and how worthy of our highest esteem and veneration!

You would have smiled, my dear friend, had you seen the delight Lucius expressed in his countenance at finding my sentiments so agreeable to his own: his eyes, while I was speaking, kindled with unusual briskness; and tempered the tender softness of his glances with an air of the highest satisfaction.

But these enthusiasts, replied my aunt, who from an affectation of humanity have treated their own species with such insolent reproach, have not had more regard to the most sacred obligations. Can we hear without astonishment the charming ties of virtue blasphemed? the foundation of all publick and private happiness treated with contempt? Strange indeed, that men should be so insensible of the striking graces of a virtuous character! that that sacred law, to which the Deity himself pays obedience, should be loaded with the vilest reproach even from the pulpit! A good-natured person must feel all the humanity of his bosom rise with indignation at the impious profanation.

However surprizing this may appear, replied Sophronia, yet our wonder will in a great measure vanish, if we consider that the same persons discard the use of reason from religion; for while this is the case, nothing can be too absurd to be embraced: nay, absurdity itself, continued she, has been made a mark of truth; and people have stretched their faith so far as to give their assent to what they themselves acknowledged to be impossible. What could the utmost barbarism of ignorance do more? The Deity, all lovely as he is, glowing with every virtue, and surrounded with the dazzling radiance of a heavenly smile, is represented as stern and inexorable, weak and partial, as pleased with idle compliments, empty praises, and little tricks

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Our conversation was here interrupted

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FELICIA.

LETTER XVIII.

OH, MADAM!

I HAVE strange things to tell you! My father arrived this morning, and has thrown me into such confusion, that I am hardly able to write to you. I was looking out of my window, bewildered with a mazy crowd of useless reflections, and had stood for some time without motion, when I was roused from this stupid situation of mind by a coach and six, which drove in a cloud of dust at a great rate towards our house, attended by several servants. I did not see them till they were near. They alighted at the gate, and almost in the same moment I heard my father's voice. Forgetful of my fears, every care was in an instant swallowed up by duty: my heart glowed with affection. 'It is my father! it is my father!' I cried aloud. He lifted up his eyes and saw me, when starting from the window, I ran down stairs with the utmost eagerness to embrace him. I met him in the hall. I flew into his arms; when turning from me to avoid my embrace, he desired me coldly to walk in; but at the same time gave a sigh, and fixed upon me a look which discovered how much he suffered by this restraint. Ah, Madam! you cannot conceive what a shock this behaviour gave me. I burst into tears, and went into the parlour, followed by Amelia.

'Tell me, my dear cousin,' said I, as soon as I could speak, 'tell me what I shall do. How must I support my father's anger? Do you think now, I deserve to be treated in this manner? I can't bear to think of offending him. I know it is hard for him to use me unkindly. But sure he has no cause to give me such a cold reception. He has heard of my loving Lucius; but is that such a crime? Alas! I must be unhappy, and Lucius must be so too!'

I was interrupted in this bitter complaint, which was intermingled with sighs and tears, by hearing my father at the door, who entered the room just as Amelia was going to endeavour to comfort me. She sat near me, with her looks fixed upon mine. He saw us both in a moving situation; and when we lifted up our eyes to his, the mutual tears that for a moment almost stopped our

fight, trickled down our cheeks, and seemed to make a strong impression on his countenance. When turning to my aunt, who stood behind him at the door, he told her, he desired to be a few minutes alone with me. At this Amelia arose, and after pressing my hand with the utmost tenderness, retired with my aunt.

My father, as if he knew not how to behave, and perhaps wanting time to compose his mind, in order to treat me with a sternness suitable to the subject of his complaint, and which, I dare say, he had need of all his resolution to support, took a few turns about the room, with the appearance of the utmost disorder; but at last growing more composed, he fastened the door, and seated himself by me, giving me a fixed look, which had a mixture of anger and sensibility; while I held down my head, drowned in tears, and almost stifled with my sighs; and indeed I was so intimidated by his presence, that I hardly durst lift up a glance, to observe his countenance. My heart ached in the most painful manner, and seemed to struggle to vent it's complaints. At last seeming to recollect myself—'Felicia, it is with shame,' said he, in a grave tone, 'that I see you the disgrace of my family. Foolish girl! what could induce you to forfeit your honour? My fondness made me flatter myself with abundance of pleasing hopes. I have considered you as my only child, as the picture of your dear mother, and you must have been sensible that my whole happiness was bound up in yours. What, then, ungrateful creature! could induce you to throw off my authority, and to suffer yourself to be seduced by an artful, designing villain? Alas! is this the fruit of that virtue and good sense in which I have prided myself? Is this the effect of that delicacy and innocent wit, in which I weakly fancied that you resembled your dear mother? this—the reward of all my tender cares and pleasing hopes? But you shall know that a father's resentment is to be feared. It is still in my power to punish you; and I assure you, theascal that has corrupted your innocence, and made me an unhappy parent, shall feel the effects of my rage.'

How was it possible, Madam, for me to support such reproaches from a father, whom

whom I had never injured even in thought? To hear Lucius, my dear Lucius, reproached in the coarsest epithets to hear him charged with seducing me! to be thought ungrateful! to be regarded as a monster, who had no sense of honour and duty! my heart rose with indignation—I could not bear these unjust reflections. But in the same moment, observing the agitations of my father's countenance, and reflecting upon what he now suffered for me, I dissolved in affection, and with a precipitation inspired by a sudden impulse of soul, threw myself at his feet. 'Hear me, Sir, hear me,' cried I, with a resolution inspired by my innocence, while my eagerness to vindicate myself filled me with an impatience that made me instantly lose sight of all that diffidence and restraint which had before kept me silent; 'let me know of what I am accused—in what respect I have offended my honour? How have I offended you? Tell me, dear father—tell me in what instance I have abused your goodness?'—'Can you ask me that question?' returned he in an inexorable tone; 'have I not sufficient reason to be offended? There, read that,' cried he, 'and blush to think that you dare presume to impose upon me by an air of innocence; I know the world too well to suffer myself to be deceived by these artifices. You will there find, that however secretly you have managed your intrigues, I have been but too well acquainted with them.'

Here throwing me a letter, and arising hastily, he walked to the door with an air that shewed him not in the least softened at the simplicity of my behaviour; when stopping short, as if blaming himself for leaving me on the floor, he returned with equal speed to help me up. But I arose before he came to me; when snatching up the letter—'I thought, Sir,' cried I, in a resolute tone, 'that I should never be so unhappy as to be refused to be heard by my father; but however unkindly you are now pleased to treat me, it shall never make me forget my duty.' At this I opened the letter, and he went out of the room. In a few minutes I no longer wondered at his treatment; my whole resentment was levelled at the wicked author of those malicious lines; and I could not help acquitting my father, and thinking his conduct highly reasonable, on a suppo-

sition that he believed those vile aspersions. You yourself, Madam, shall see the letter, that you may judge how grossly I have been abused; and I now transcribe it with the utmost exactness.

'SIR,
'**T**HO i am intyrlly unnown to you
' my regard for your onner makes
' me lay before you an asare in wich you
' are partikularly consarnnd tho i must
' confels i have a uast deal of reluktans
' at kommunikatin the secret intreges of
' miss felisia for wom I have a grate af-
' fecthon but you will no all sooner or
' later i am uery sorry to tell you that
' unnown to her aunt she kepes com-
' pany with a yung gentleman of little
' fortin wen compard with hers but it
' wud give you too much consarn to say
' that her uarty is intirely lost i hope it
' is not quite so bad yet howiuar he has
' don her a still grater ingury by kor-
' ruptin her mynd god nos nothing but
' my regard for her cud make me send
' you this affliktive neus euery word of
' wich I ashur you upon my onner is
' strictly treu i wud aduise you to send
' for her up to toun as priuatly as possi-
' ble her ant loves her as euery body dus
' that nos her and it wud be a sad aflik-
' shon to the gud lady to find that she
' shud behave so badly while under her
' care and as this wud be a consarn that
' cud do her no gud it wud be better
' not to let her no it i have won more
' thing to ad and that is that however
' gilty you find her you wud treat her
' gently this my affekshon for her makes
' me beg of you remember she is your
' child so concluds your and felisias sin-
' cere tho' unnown friend.

' P. S. the yung mans father is a
' doun rite lybartin and not wurth a
' graut.'

I am sure, Madam, your generous concern for my happiness makes you now feel much the same risings of indignation at reading the vile insinuations of this ridiculous letter that I did, and therefore I need not particularly describe the various pangs of working antipathy it occasioned in my bosom. What gross, what infamous reflections! But a heart filled with conscious innocence is the best support against slander. What little reason have we to boast of the superior advantages of education, when per-

sons of the meanest attainments can destroy our peace, and make such bitter inroads on our happiness! The stupidity and ill-spelling of the letter I was sensible could not give my father the least reason to suspect the sincerity of the writer, since a person of the meanest sense and most illiberal education is equally as good a judge of facts as those who are possessed of the most amiable accomplishments. And indeed, so far from this being an objection, it must appear to him as a circumstance that confirmed the hateful insinuations it contained; since he would naturally suppose, that a person who appeared so much beneath me, could have no very particular acquaintance with me, and consequently could have no interest in view in attempting to deceive him. These were some of the first reflections I made on this part of my misfortunes. 'But who is the writer?' said I to myself; 'this I am particularly interested to know, since it is of the greatest importance towards clearing my injured innocence, and regaining my father's esteem.' At this I fixed my eyes again upon the letter, and fancied it was a woman's hand, while the false orthography convinced me that my conjecture was well founded. But then, who had I offended? 'There are none,' said I, 'that I have seen here, that I dare fix such a base suspicion upon; besides, could malice alone seek to ruin me, without some deep-laid scheme of rankling selfishness? But whose happiness do I oppose? I know nobody to whose felicity I would not contribute. What must I think? How can I clear myself, without being able to find out the wicked author of this heavy misfortune?'

Thus, Madam, I reasoned then, and thus I reason still; while every reflection, instead of giving me the least light into this dark affair, wraps it in a still deeper obscurity. But, alas! had the whole been as great a falsehood as that part which charges the virtuous Lucius and me with guilt, I should have less to fear. My aunt is ignorant of our tender passion; I have seen him without her knowledge; encouraged his addresses without my father's permission; and still love that worthy son of an unworthy father, the amiable son of an abandoned libertine. How can I confess this, without making him suspect that the person to whom he owes this information is too

well acquainted with my weakness to be mistaken in the least particular? The truth of one circumstance will give credit to the rest, and give all too great an air of truth; while my father's opinion that Lucius is the author of my ruin, will root so deep a prejudice against him, that he will be deaf to all that can be said in his favour, and hardly ever be brought to hear him vindicated with patience.

All these reflections passed through my mind with the utmost precipitation; for, impatient to find something to fix upon that might lead me out of this labyrinth, and teach me how to calm my father's anger, I in an instant collected every scattered thought, and sought all around me for some pleasing friendly hope on which I might support my spirits, ready to sink under my father's displeasure: but my soul could glance its eye upon no comfort except its innocence; and as often as that occurred to my mind, there beamed through it a ray of peace, which preserved me from sinking under this heavy load of difficulties. Amidst these various agitations, my thoughts frequently returned to my father, to the almost infinite instances I have received of his goodness. Intendering thoughts! delightful ideas! though now attended with bitterness—a soothing bitterness, that melted my soul, and filled my eyes again with fresh flowing tears. But here again my innocence, sweetest comfort of the distressed! returned again, and made me reflect that I was still as worthy of his indulgent regards as ever. Happy, delightful thought! O virtue! thou noblest source of fortitude, thou sweetest support of the human mind, how unspeakable is thy value, and how much more than wretched is the mind that wants thy aids!

Employed in this manner, I spent a considerable time alone in the parlour, expecting every moment my father's return; for which, however, I was not yet prepared; when at last a servant came to tell me that dinner was upon table. I had hitherto been too deeply engaged to think of dining, and was therefore unprovided with an excuse to prevent it, though, in the situation I was in, it was natural to feel a great deal of reluctance against sitting at the same table with my father; and besides, the emotions I had suffered had entirely taken away my appetite. My mind, yet too disturbed for company,

company, made me look upon solitude as a relief; I therefore sent word that I was indisposed, and desired to be excused; but the next moment, considering that it would appear very singular to the family, and perhaps set the servants upon searching for the reason of my behaviour, if I alone should be absent from the table at my father's coming, and that nothing could appear to them sufficient to excuse my refusal; I hastily wiped my eyes, and arming myself with all the courage I could collect, made haste into the dining-room, in order to overtake the servant before he had delivered his message.

I took my seat with the rest, with an air as calm as possible, though it is not to be supposed that my countenance could be entirely divested of every trace of uneasiness. My father had his eyes continually fixed upon me with an earnestness that alternately expressed his anger and pity, while I endeavoured to support his looks with an easy humble confidence. My aunt and Amelia regarded us both with a silent kind of admiration, and I dare say there never was an elegant entertainment passed over with fewer words. As soon as the desert was taken away, I drank my duty to my father: this was the first syllable that I had spoken; and though I had not eat a mouthful, neither my aunt nor cousin had pressed me to it. They saw my disorder, and did not question my having cause for uneasiness, since my father appeared no more at ease than I. I drank, I say, my duty to my father; but my heart was too full to suffer me to speak it plainly: these words trembled on my quivering lips; for my heart so strongly felt the force of duty, that it would speak it too; it struggled to speak it; my softness would not be restrained; a gush of filial piety started into my eyes; and the moment I lifted up my hand, hardly knowing what I did, the tears started, and fell into the glass: I then set it down untouched. At this circumstance my father seemed greatly affected. My aunt, with tears in her eyes, filled me another glass; when looking at her, while the rising swell again almost intercepted my sight—'You wonder, Madam,' cried I, 'at the manner in which I welcome my father.' Here she interrupted me, by ordering the servant that was in waiting to retire; and he being gone, I continued—'And is

'it not a thing to be wondered at? I have not seen my father before these six months; that dear father, whose tenderness for me has been too great to be expressed: but, alas! his mind is tainted with the foulest suspicions. O help me to vindicate my honour, and to find out the monstrous author of these infamous lies! I am sure he will be glad to find me innocent; I know he will.'

Here I threw the letter upon the table; and, unable to retain any longer the impetuous glut of sorrow that now arose too high to be concealed, I drew out my handkerchief, and hanging down my head, gave free scope to my tears. My grief would not now admit of restraint, I therefore neither stifled my sighs nor groans; I sobbed aloud, and every one in the company bore a part in this melancholy entertainment; they all sympathized with me, and wept without reserve; even my father could not help joining with the rest. I lifted up my eyes, swimming in tears, and saw some big drops roll down his awful face; when rising hastily, as if he feared being softened too much to be able to retain his rigour, or dreading that he should lose his judgment in his affection, went out of the room with a countenance that expressed more tenderness than austerity.

As soon as he was gone, my aunt, taking me by the hand, and laying down the letter—'I have been much surprized,' said she, wiping her eyes, 'at my brother's behaviour, and have in vain endeavoured to find out the cause of it; he would give me no reason for treating you as he has done, but you have discovered the mystery. He has been informed of your passion for Lucius: and don't you really love him? I have for some time suspected it. Come, my dear, be sincere: there is no crime in loving a man of his character. You need not tell me that you are innocent of what is here laid to your charge; I am satisfied that you are so; and have too good an opinion of you both, to entertain the least suspicion injurious to his honour or yours; you are both virtuous, and both worthy of my brother's esteem.'—'Ah, Madam!' cried I, with a resolution inspired by my grief, 'will you forgive my injuring your goodness by concealing it from you? This is kind indeed! I do love him, tenderly love him, love him even more than

than myself; but indeed, Madam, our mutual passion has been always regulated by the strictest virtue; it is an innocent passion; and I assure you, that he loves me too well to propose any step that would disoblige my father; nor would he, great as his love is, accept of my hand without his consent, who alone has a right to dispose of me. This I know to be true; he has told me so himself, while I have rejoiced in his virtue, and considered it as a most convincing instance of the purity and sublimity of his soul.

I don't question it, my dear, returned she, pressing my hand. But who is the author of this malicious letter? I should be glad to be informed of that. But Lucius may possibly be able to give us some light; I will write to him to-night, and inclose this in it: mean-while, I will take upon me to clear up your virtue, and to give my brother better sentiments of this amiable young man. But it is fit he should appear himself: let him be his own advocate; he will plead the cause of his own heart with prevailing eloquence.—“Dear Madam,” cried I, embracing her, “is it possible that you can be so very good! Do you indeed think we shall be able to remove the invidious impressions that have been made upon my father’s mind? O how happy shall I think myself, if I can but regain his affection! for the uneasiness he suffers on my account is more painful to me than all the effects of his displeasure.” My aunt embraced me in her turn, and endeavoured to recover my spirits by her caresses; and, in short, having called for a pen and ink, wrote in the following terms to my dear Lucius—

BY my brother’s arrival this morning, I find that you and Felicia have been much injured; but, to remove the pain this news may give you, I offer my best endeavours to undeceive him; nor shall my utmost efforts be wanting to do you justice, by convincing him that you have a mind that scorns to be guilty of what is laid to your charge in the inclosed libel. Let it be your care to find out the wicked author, and let us see you as soon as possible. Yours, &c.

This note, I say, was wrote in the wrapper, sealed up, and sent away by a servant, who had orders to deliver it into his own hand. You see now, Madam, the situation of my affairs; I am upon a crisis which must determine my future happiness or misery. It is true, the satisfaction I have received from my aunt’s goodness is too great to be expressed; she has given me hopes which counterbalance my fears; and, in the midst of all my uneasiness, my gratitude and affection for her have some charms, some engaging sweets, which will make themselves felt: but yet, while my father is so offended, I must have a claim to your pity; and therefore, with the greatest propriety, subscribe myself, your ladyship’s most unhappy servant,

FELICIA.

LETTER XIX.

BY the last post, Madam, I gave you an account of my father’s arrival; and of the dreadful turn his presence made in my affairs; and I imagine that, filled with a friendly impatience, you long to hear whether I have yet so far vindicated my honour as to recover his esteem, or whether I am still oppressed with the same uneasiness I then laboured under. I will therefore make haste to gratify your curiosity, and repeat my letters, without waiting the return of the post for an answer; but did you but know how much I need your advice and consolation, you would be as expeditious in writing as I am.

My dear afflicted father, I told you, unable to withstand his natural affection, and resolving to be guided only by the cool dictates of his judgment, was constrained, in order to keep a mastery over his passions, to retire for some time, to collect his spirits; while I took advantage of his absence to write to you my last melancholy epistle, which took me up the whole afternoon, having transcribed the ridiculous letter I sent you a copy of while my aunt was writing to Lucius.

In the evening, this good lady had the precaution to order the servants not to enter the room, lest they should be a witness of any expressions that might shock my delicacy for them to hear: a behaviour that shewed at once her prudence

dence and regard for my reputation. Even at supper a dumb-waiter supplied the place of an attendant, so that we were entirely at liberty to enter without restraint upon the injustice of my father's suspicions; nor could my aunt let slip this first opportunity of assuring him, that, notwithstanding the malicious letter which had given him so much uneasiness, she still retained the highest opinion of my virtue and discretion. 'But, to clear Felicia's innocence,' said she, 'it is necessary that we should try to find out the wicked writer; but as this will probably require time, you must endeavour mean while to divest yourself of prejudices, which may prevent your discovering the truth. It is not whether my niece has placed her affections upon a person of a fortune something inferior to hers that we are now to enquire after, but whether it is upon an unworthy object; whether she has violated her regard for virtue, behaved in any instance inconsistent with a decent modesty, or had any thoughts of disposing of herself without your consent. In short, it is your Felicia's honour and duty that we are to vindicate; and I don't doubt but we shall be able to do it to the satisfaction of any disinterested person.'—What, then, returned he, 'would you insinuate that there is no crime in placing her affections upon a man beneath her? A very pretty story truly! If she has no more regard for my authority than privately to favour the addresses of a worthless fellow, what ought I to think of her? Is this any instance either of her duty or modesty? No, no—I am not fit to be consulted—the old fool, her father, would be too scrupulous; he would perhaps consult his daughter's honour to the prejudice of her inclinations; and it would be time enough to seek his consent when it will be of no service to him to refuse it.' Severe as these words were, the manner of his uttering them added a double sharpness; they touched me in a tender part, and penetrated my very soul. What could I do, then, but burst into tears; into bitter tears, that arose from an agony too painful to be endured? These were all the answer that I could make him; only, as I rose to go to bed, I sobbed out—'Indeed, Sir, your suspicions go to my very heart; but it is my satisfaction that I don't deserve

them. Indeed I have never injured you, even in thought.'

You will readily believe that I was too much indisposed to taste the refreshing sweets of sleep. I was no sooner laid down, than I began to give way to a whole crowd of painful reflections. I considered myself as the most unhappy creature upon earth, and as worthy of the pity of the meanest peasant. 'My father,' said I to myself, 'looks upon me with shame! my dear, my tender father, hardens his heart against me! I have lost his esteem, lost his affection. Had I sacrificed my passion for Lucius to him, I might have made a merit of my obedience, and the pleasure he would have received from the reflection of my duty would have been some recompence for the violence I should have done myself. But I have now lost both my father and my lover. What a shock to nature! what a violence to love! Like a wretch the most desolate and forlorn, I find myself deprived of every comfort, of every comfort except my innocence. What a group of miseries has this day produced! When filled with joy at my father's presence, while nature, struggling in my bosom, made me fly to his arms, longing to embrace him, and eager to welcome him upon his arrival; to turn away from me with disdain, to treat me as a guilty criminal, as the disgrace of his family! O my heart! how have I been able to sustain the shock! What would I not give to find out the author of all my troubles!—O, my dear Lucius, didst thou but know the agony, the distraction of my soul at this moment, how nearly would thy despair resemble mine! Alas! thou wilt know it too soon! I shall never be thine! I must bid adieu to all the pleasing prospects of happiness; they are vanished, and I shall be miserable!—O my God! pity my distress, and vindicate the cause of my injured innocence! Thou art still my friend; and to thee I can appeal as a witness of the purity of my passion, of the sincerity of my duty, and the integrity of my heart. I must, I will confide in thy goodness.'

In reflections like these I spent the greatest part of the night, while sleep seemed to fly from my heavy eye-lids, parched up, and drained of every tear; nor was it till my usual time of rising,

rising, that, composed a little by some pious thoughts, I fell into a slumber, in which I continued till noon. I then arose, extremely indisposed with a violent pain in my head; when Amelia, thinking the air, which then blew with a pleasing freshness, might give me some relief, engaged me to take a turn in the fields. But I shall omit the conversation which passed between us, which indeed was as gloomy as possible. The thoughts of her own happiness, so sincere is her affection, could not prevent her bearing an engaging part in my afflictions; and though the day is fixed for her union with Mellifont, she seemed to sympathize in my griefs with as real a sorrow as if her heart likewise was devoid of all joy.

Upon my return I found myself much more disordered than when I went out; and therefore, by my aunt's advice, had a light dinner provided for me, and brought into my chamber, where I dined with Amelia; and that being over, was persuaded to try if sleep would give me any relief; and indeed, after an hour's repose, found the pain in my head much abated. I then went down stairs; and enquiring for my aunt, was told that she was in the parlour with my father, and Prudilla, who had just come to pay us a visit. I hesitated at first to consider whether I should join them or not; but considering that to avoid my father's presence would only encrease his opinion of my guilt, I resolved, in spite of my reluctance, to bear a part in the conversation, or at least to make one of the company.

As soon as I entered the parlour, I could not help taking notice of Prudilla's extraordinary complaisance; which was the more remarkable, as she had lately treated me, whenever I chanced to see her, with a reserved coldness; that made me fancy I had offended her; but now she oppressed me with her caresses, and seemed to strive to outdo herself by the excess of her complaisance. 'My dear,' said she, after enquiring my health, 'I am extremely sorry to see you so much out of order. Really you are more indisposed than you are willing to think yourself. I am afraid our country air don't agree with you. Don't you think so too, my dear? I think you feel a little feverish; God forbid a relapse! You are not yet recovered of a fever, that had like to

have proved mortal.'—'I thank you, Madam, for your concern for my health,' returned I; 'but indeed, I have no apprehensions of that kind. Mine is only a slight indisposition; a pain in my head and lowness of spirits, which I hope will soon be removed: I am pretty subject to these disorders.'—'You have, I think, a very delicate constitution,' she replied; 'but even that is a great mercy, when it has such a happy effect as I observe it to have in you. For a person so young, to have a mind fixed upon a better world! to give such early proofs of your being one of the elect!—Really, Sir,' continued she, 'you are a very happy man in being blessed with a daughter who has so much grace and piety. Every body here is charmed with her behaviour, and I don't think there is a person living that can give her an ill word.'

My father here shook his head, and gave a sigh, and at the same time smiled with an air that seemed to thank her for her good opinion of me. My aunt smiled too, but with this difference, that her looks did not express the least degree of gratitude; for the smile which in my father's countenance discovered a secret pleasure, impressed only upon hers a satirical cast. She knew Prudilla; my father was entirely ignorant of her character; and though she could not, as she afterwards told me, dive into her motive for giving me such devout panegyrics, yet she could not help thinking there must be something at the bottom of all this that she ought to discover. She shrugged up her shoulders with an air of distrust; her eyes ran over each of our faces, as if she sought to know, by the traces she found there, whether our thoughts were conformable to her own. Mean while Amelia, who sat next me, jogged me with her elbow, and looking in my face, bit her lips, and seemed to say—'Observe—what egregious flattery!'

'I am glad,' said my father, after a moment's hesitation, 'to hear so good an account of my daughter: but the opinions of our friends are not always the most just; they are blind to our foibles; and those few perfections we have, they are so complaisant as to magnify much above the truth. But did you never, Madam,' continued he, 'hear
the

‘the least reflection upon Felicia’s character?’—‘No, Sir, upon my word, not a syllable, I assure you,’ said she, with the utmost earnestness; ‘there is not a person living that can give her an ill word. She is so much beloved, that if the consideration of her health, or any other reason, should engage you to take her with you to town, every body that knows her would be extremely afflicted. But if her health makes it necessary, it would be an injury to her to desire her stay; however, we should be extremely sorry to lose her agreeable, edifying company.’—‘I don’t doubt it,’ returned my aunt; ‘but do you talk of removing her from the fragrant breezes of the country to the smoke of London, for the sake of her health? The doctors are here all against you; in my opinion, Felicia is much better where she is.’—‘Nay,’ rejoined my father, ‘I have no objection to the place. This house stands in a very delightful situation; and the bloom upon Amelia’s countenance is to me a sufficient proof of the purity of the air.’—‘I shall not dispute the point with you,’ returned Prudilla; ‘all constitutions, you know, are not alike; and, for my part, I am so much convinced that London would agree better with Miss Felicia, that I could consent to lose her company for the advantage she would receive from it in recovering a more perfect state of health. Don’t you think, Miss Felicia,’ said she in a fawning tone, ‘I should make a considerable sacrifice in foregoing the pleasure of your conversation purely for your advantage? But my good friends here don’t seem to be of my opinion. What do you think of it? you are the best judge; were you not stronger, more brisk and lively, when you lived in town, than you have been since? I think I heard you say you were.’—‘No, Madam, I never said any such thing,’ replied I, in a peevish tone, surprized at what could be the reason of her desiring me to return to London. ‘Did not you? I really thought you did,’ returned she again: ‘I am glad to find I was mistaken; for indeed, I desire nothing more than to be blessed with the continuance of your improving conversation. I was saying other day, to a certain lady of my acquaintance, that it would be a great misfortune to us all to lose you;’ for

‘positively,’ said I, ‘a young lady of such a holy and virtuous life is very hard to be met with.’ She was of my opinion; and though I don’t love to praise people to their faces, I cannot help saying, that we talked I don’t know how long on your piety.’

But I weary both you, Madam, and myself, with relating tattle of no consequence. Hitherto every thing went on smoothly. Prudilla had attempted to persuade my father to take me with him to town; but for what reason I could not then imagine: her arguments, however, proved unsuccessful; when seeing me discover some marks of uneasiness, she tried again to cajole me with the most ridiculous kind of flattery, which was the less insupportable, as it employed my father’s thoughts, and prevented him from entering upon a more painful subject. All this while, every thing had the air of mystery; but her dark designs were soon to be laid open, when the very praises she so liberally bestowed upon me were to turn to her own confusion. I should have told you, that the servant I mentioned in my last to have been sent to Lucius, with orders to deliver the letter, which has been the cause of all my sufferings, into his hand, returned without an answer, he not being at home: he was therefore sent again yesterday at noon, and returning about three hours after, my aunt was called out to speak to him, just at the time when Prudilla was in the midst of her devoutly fulsome panegyrics, in which I let her proceed without interruption. My aunt’s stay was very short, for she returned in two minutes after she left us, with a countenance inflamed with anger; her eyes sparkled with resentment, and every gesture expressed a rage too violent to be restrained; when sitting down for a few minutes, to recover herself, she perused a letter she had in her hand, while we all kept silence, and, big with expectation, seemed to wait for the discovery of some important secret. For my part, I knew not what to think; I was unacquainted with the servant’s being sent this last time to Lucius, for he was dispatched to him while I was in my chamber. ’Tis true, as I had nothing to reproach myself with, I had no reason to fear my aunt’s reproaches; but yet, as I had already been greatly injured, I could not help dreading some farther practices against me; I therefore observed her behaviour,

haviour, in order to anticipate a discovery in which I did not doubt my being concerned; but I had not watched her a minute, before I guessed the whole, and thought myself able to discover the cause of those strong emotions which agitated her generous soul. She frowned, she bit her lips, she cast a scornful glance at Prudilla, that expressed both her anger and surprize; and then, with a look of disgust, continued reading for half a minute longer; when, as if unable to proceed, she repeated the same marks of aversion and astonishment: at last, laying the letter upon the table, and looking at Prudilla—‘Did you ever hear,’ Madam,’ said she, ‘the least reflection upon Felicia’s character? Did you ever hear her virtue, her prudence, or her reputation, called in question?’—‘N—o, n—o, Madam,’ returned she, with some confusion; at the same time changing colour, while my aunt rivetting her eyes to hers, seemed to increase her disorder. ‘But why do you ask me that question again?’ added she, with a hesitation that shewed she was greatly alarmed: ‘you don’t suspect me of—of—injuring her so much as to say the contrary?’—‘You then sincerely believe her to be perfectly virtuous?’ resumed my aunt. ‘Yes, Madam, indeed I do,’ said she; ‘upon my word, I do; as virtuous as myself.’ Here her face, which a moment before was covered with a livid paleness, was now all of a flame. ‘Yes, and a great deal more so, Madam,’ replied my aunt, ‘or I am much mistaken.’—‘What do you mean, Madam?’ cried Prudilla, rising, and casting a glance at the door; ‘have you a mind to affront me? A great deal more so! I protest I don’t understand you. A great deal more so!—A great deal more virtuous than I am! Is this the manner in which you treat your friends? Somebody has told you that I have writ—they have told you that—a—I have said something to Miss Felicia’s prejudice, and you are unwise enough to believe them; but it is a lye, Madam,’ continued she, raising her voice; ‘an arrant lye; as great a falshood as ever was invented. I thought, Madam, you had too good an opinion of me to suspect my being guilty of such a thing.—But ladies, your servant—Your servant, Sir. I shall know how to resent this

treatment. Ha! mighty pretty! more virtuous than I!’

Here she flew to the door in a violent rage; possibly to avoid any farther explanations: while Amelia jogged me with her elbow, and whispered—‘Did you observe the word *writ*? She had like to have confessed all at once; she knows the contents of the letter; and that there is no name subscribed, as well as if she had read it this moment. O guilt,’ continued she, shaking her head, ‘what a fool dost thou make of us!’ In reply, I only smiled, and shook my head too. In the mean time, Prudilla was pulling the lock, while she found all her endeavours to open the door prove fruitless; for my aunt, in coming in, foreseeing that it would be difficult to detain her long enough to convince my father of her guilt, had wisely turned the key, and put it in her pocket.

Prudilla was now enraged almost to a degree of madness; and turning about, called out aloud—‘Open the door, Madam. By what authority do you pretend to detain me here? Open the door, I say, or I’ll break it open.’ She here thundered at it with her feet; while my aunt, smiling, cried in a soft tone—‘Come, come, Madam, softly, softly—softly—pray don’t expose yourself to the derision of my servants. Pray, Madam, be advised; this passion don’t become you. Indeed it does not; it would almost make one suspect you of something very bad. Dear Madam, be so good as to sit down; you must not leave us so soon; upon my word we can’t part with you yet.’ My father all this while seemed filled with the greatest astonishment; he appeared neither to know how to act, nor what to say; however, reflecting at last, perhaps, that my aunt must have some extraordinary reason for this change of behaviour to a person whom a quarter of an hour before she treated with much politeness, he arose, and taking Prudilla by the hand, led her to her chair; at the same time intreating her to compose herself. When, seeing it was to no purpose to make any farther resistance, she peaceably resumed her seat; and fixing her eyes upon the floor, waited with the utmost uneasiness for what my aunt had farther to add. Her looks were now dejected and melancholy; and it was easy to see the reluctance she felt at being obliged, in spite

spite of herself, to hear the mortifying things she had reason to expect.

'What is the matter?' cried my aunt, seeing her seated; 'you appear strangely discomposed: but, however, I must have some farther discourse with you. You have been saying abundance of agreeable things of my dear niece, for which she is undoubtedly extremely obliged to you; but is she really so virtuous, pious and discreet, as you have represented her? Pray tell us all you know of her'—and then putting on her spectacles, and taking the letter to my father out of her pocket, she proceeded in a slow, reading tone—'and don't shew such a vast deal of reluctance at communicating the secret in triques of Miss Felicia.'—'I don't know what you mean, Madam,' replied she. 'You treat me very unworthily, very unlike a gentlewoman.'—'Why, is not this letter yours?' returned my aunt. 'No, Madam,' she replied; 'how should it be mine? I scorn to use any body ill, much less Miss Felicia. 'Twas barbarous to suspect me of a crime of this nature; but we are all liable to be slandered.—Miss Felicia,' added she, wiping her eyes, 'why don't you take my part? I have often vindicated you on the like occasion. I could not bear to hear any body use you ill; 'tis cruel then in you to hear me treated so monstrously on your account.'—'I humbly thank you, Madam,' returned I, 'though I cannot see that you could be put to much pains in vindicating my reputation, when you have never heard, as you say, the least ill word of me.' This produced a general smile; only Amelia, delighted with the thought of speedily seeing my innocence cleared up in the presence of my father, could not forbear indulging the ill-natured pleasure of encreasing Prudilla's confusion, by a triumphant laugh: when my aunt resumed, with that superiority in her air which conscious virtue gives over the meanness of detected guilt—'Come, come, Madam, these subterfuges and low evasions serve only to set your crimes in a more glaring light: nor do I expect to hear any thing else but such absurd contradictions, while you endeavour to clear yourself of those base and scandalous actions which it is in my power to prove against you. This letter, this vile, this infamous

and malicious letter, which equally shews the abandoned character and ignorance of the writer, is yours; I know it is—nor will any thing you can say persuade me to believe the contrary. 'Tis your hand; and it exactly agrees with another I have here, that discovers the motive of your actions, and lays open and naked the wickedness and deformity of your corrupted soul. Is it for this you affect to appear virtuous, to practise the blackest vices with a better grace? to give an innocent mind all the distress, and shame, and sorrow, which only a guilty one, like yours, ought to suffer? To estrange the affections of an indulgent parent from an only child, the delight of his life, the object of his dearest hopes and fondest wishes? To throw a damp over all his prospects of joy, by representing her as guilty, as a disgrace and reproach to his name, whom he has justly admired and loved for her virtues? Blush, Madam, if you have any sense of shame, or the least degree of that extraordinary modesty to which you make such mighty pretences—blush, and look into yourself with horror. O my stars! for one of your years to attempt to delude a young man—a very young man—and to attempt to frighten him to a compliance with your lewd desires, by threatening to deprive him of his mistress! What impudence! And to dare to attempt it too!—to attempt it by such base methods! But, to finish your shame, and convince my brother, that what I have said is but too true, I'll read this vile letter.'

Here, putting on her spectacles, she began in the slow tone of a person reading a hand almost unintelligible—

'UNKIND LUCIUS,

'IF I desired to meet you in the dark last night, it was only to save my blushes. [How modest this was! (interrupted Amelia) while my aunt proceeded] Come to-night, and I'll refuse you nothing.'

Prudilla had sat all this while in a stupid kind of amazement, with a countenance on which was painted all the horror, and rage, and mortified dejection, that guilt and unmasked hypocrisy could give it. Her mouth was open, every feature distorted, and her whole

frame trembling and convulsed. She continued unable to speak, unable to interrupt what gave her such pain to hear. But now a sudden impulse of shame made her start from her seat, and snatching part of the letter out of my aunt's hand, in a violent passion, tore it to pieces, crying—'This is too much, Madam; nobody could bear it—it is a forgery—a cursed forgery.' While my aunt, smiling with an air of contempt, cast her eyes upon a small piece she held fast in her fingers, which presenting to my father, he read the following words, which I have now before me—

'fuse my request or tell
'w to be revenged on your
'acquaint her father with
'Your blushing

You are ready now, Madam, to wonder how I could think of giving you this unintelligible fragment, under which was remaining the three first letters of her name, for I cannot now be supposed to be in a disposition to puzzle you with riddles; but, however insignificant it may appear, it not only served to convince my father that the hand was exactly the same as that in which the letter was written that had given us so much uneasiness, but assisted my aunt in recollecting the whole lines, of which these were a part; which she might easily do, as it was hardly half an hour since she had read the letter entire; and then, indeed, they appeared of the greatest consequence, since they explained the motive of this dark proceeding.

My father having compared this piece with the letter on the table, returned it to my aunt, who looking at it with attention, after a moment's consideration, told us, she remembered the lines ran thus—

'BUT if you refuse my fond request, or tell any body what you know
'I would have a secret, I know how to
'be revenged on your idol, that you
'doat so much upon, and will positively
'acquaint her father with every thing
'you would hide from him. Your
'blushing, &c.'

'These, I assure you,' continued my aunt, 'were exactly her words.'—'O monstrous!' cried Prudilla, throwing away the paper, which she had tore into small pieces; 'monstrous indeed! what

'vile insinuations! that I should be suspected of such crimes! But my piety and modesty are too well known for any body to believe it. I charged with thinking of a fellow! an odious, nasty fellow! But I'll still be revenged; I will make him smart for it. I—that never had an indecent thought in my life! I think of a filthy fellow! No, no, Madam, my reputation for chastity is too well established for any body to imagine it. It is a lye; and, for what I know, you, Madam, may have a hand in it: but I can see through your plots. This, Sir, is a contrivance between Lucius and your wicked daughter, whom I never suspected till this moment; they would be revenged because I was enough your friend to oppose her marrying such a villain, such a debauched, lewd villain. And so, having my letter there, they must needs counterfeit my hand! Here she forced a ridiculous, affected laugh, and then proceeded—'La! Miss, I did not think you had been so cunning. But you shall know that my character is above censure.'

It would be impossible, Madam, to describe all the strange contortions, the convulsive gestures, and affected airs, with which this speech was uttered. She had at first the very look of a fury; she grinned, she stared, she stamped, and walked about the room, fluttering her fan; while her countenance, as well as every action, expressed the swell of rage, the sting of conscious shame, and all the mortifying pangs that could distort and rack a corrupted heart, ashamed of being discovered, too proud ingenuously to confess it's guilt, and too much heated by passion to attend to the little decourums of her character. But at last, thinking, in the heat of her rage, she might throw all upon Lucius and me, and perhaps persuade my father, at least, that she was ignorant of those crimes which touched her most to the quick, she changed her part, and, swallowed up by the thoughts of revenge, forgot that by this contradictory behaviour she took the most effectual way of destroying at once her character, and discovering the deformity of her black, abandoned soul. But she was incapable of reflection, and, hurried away by a torrent of passion, caught at the first relief that offered; a relief that made her forget her shame, and feel a shadowy dawn of triumph.

triumph. Good God! can there be worse miseries than those which arise from guilt? What destruction does it occasion, while it's very reliefs plunge us into more aggravated wretchedness, into deeper horrors!

My father, now unable to contain his indignation, arose, and damping the triumphant smile, which just began to quiver on her countenance, by a stern and contemptuous glance—'Madam,' cried he, 'don't think it in your power to impose upon me by these low artifices; I can see, through all these doublings, the weak subterfuges of an abandoned mind. If my daughter has no crimes but what such a vile hypocrite as you can reproach her with, I shall do her the justice to think her innocent.'

What a beam of joy, at these words, shot through my soul! My aunt now arose, and opening the door, cried—'Begone, Madam; for your brother's sake, I shall be more tender of your reputation than you deserve, but never presume again to enter into my house. Go, and blush in secret—I am sorry that ever I knew you.' Here Prudilla left us, hanging down her head, and muttering something we could not perfectly understand.

But I find I must break off. When I began this letter, I fancied it would be very short; but I am got, before I am aware, to my usual length. Sure I must be an extravagant lover of writing to send you such long epistles. The post is ready to set out, and I have but just time to repeat my assurances that I am, and ever shall be, your ladyship's most affectionate friend,

FELICIA.

LETTER XX.

AS soon, Madam, as Prudilla was gone, elated with the thoughts of what had passed, and charmed with the delightful prospect of a speedy reconciliation with my father, I was going to embrace this favourable moment of throwing myself at his feet, and begging to be restored to his esteem; but I no sooner rose up, in order to make these submissions, than, stopped by the pride of virtue, I reflected that I had already made too many attempts to soften his unjust anger; and that, if he was now

convinced of my innocence, it did not become me to entreat for what I had a right to demand from him. 'Shall I, like a criminal,' said I to myself, 'supplicate for forgiveness? In what have I offended? It is for guilt to stoop so low, innocence has no need of stooping.' At this thought I sat down again; and my father and my aunt, still warm with resentment, being now seated too, could not help making some reflections on the odious deformity of Prudilla's mind.

'What an abandoned hypocrite!' cried my father, with a look still disturbed by passion; 'what a vile incendiary! But how ridiculously inconsistent was her conduct! I confess I am not able to think it, in any instance, agreeable to common sense; nor can I determine which is the most remarkable, her folly, or her wickedness. What a heap of contradictions! of absurd, palpable contradictions!'—'Really Sir,' replied my aunt, 'I cannot think her so inconsistent with herself as you do; her artifices appear to me all of a piece. Thinking Felicia an obstacle to her criminal desires, she endeavours to prevail with you to send for her up to town; you unexpectedly come to search into the truth of what she had alledged against your daughter; when, dreading a discovery that might prove fatal to her reputation, she comes, hoping to clear herself of suspicion by contradicting every thing she had said in the letter; and at the same time colouring over her artifices by the grossest flattery, endeavours to persuade us that our air does not agree with her constitution; and thus, by a concern for her health, and an affectation of the strictest friendship, she flattered herself with carrying on her grand design, which is still the removal of your daughter. And, as to the rest of her conduct,' continued my aunt, 'it is easy to be accounted for, from the strong perturbations of a guilty mind, terrified at the thoughts of a discovery, and therefore in too great a ferment to attend to the nice decors which were necessary to carry on such a difficult design, and too much perplexed to secure herself by the subtle aids of a ready imagination. She affects to appear a lady of the strictest piety, and most unblemished sanctity of life; she is the censor of the neighbourhood;

'bourhood; and not the smallest fault
'can escape her notice: judge, then, how
'hard, it must be to carry on this dis-
'guise when so closely attacked, and
'how terrible the apprehension of being
'seen in her true deformity.'

'Right, right,' cried my father; 'she
'is more subtle than I imagined; at least
'I ought to think so,' added he, in a
tender tone, 'in vindication of my too
'easy credulity. I have then injured my
'Felicia!' I could hear no more—I
flew into his arms; while he, seeing my
intention, arose and stepped forwards to
receive me. What a delightful, painful
moment!

O my dear friend, you cannot con-
ceive even a distant idea of half the satis-
faction and joy I felt at this instant.
Something like the voice of nature hushed
my troubled soul into a peaceful trans-
port, into a rapture less tumultuous,
though not less pleasing, than that of two
meeting lovers. My life seemed to run
up to it's source, and to return back
again in a sweeter and more tranquil
stream. I embraced my father, as if I
had not seen him till that moment, as if
that was the happy instant of his arrival.
Every care, every trouble, was then for-
got; my present joy took up all my
thoughts, and all those thoughts were
extasy. My father, having tenderly
embraced me, with the affection of a
parent who had found a child more than
doubly lost; while nature, rising in his
eyes, swelled into a tear, and rolled
down his awful cheeks; seated me in a
chair that was next his own, and taking
hold of my hand—'My dear Felicia,'
said he, while all the parent gushed in
his eyes, 'I have dearly suffered in too
'easily believing thee guilty; but canst
'thou forgive the disquiet I have given
'thee, and overlook this weak credulity
'that—' 'Dear Sir,' cried I, interrupt-
ing him, unable to hold out any longer,
and almost ashamed of his condescen-
sion, 'I can't bear to hear you. Is this
'the language of a father to a daugh-
'ter? No, Sir, it shall never be yours
'to me; you oppress me too much by
'this unmerited goodness. The terrible
'disquiets we have both felt must be
'placed to Prudilla's account. But I
'heartily forgive her; she has been suf-
'ficiently mortified: we will think of
'her then no more. My conduct, my
'resignation to your will, shall suffi-
'ciently shew how little I deserve her

'slanders. You shall know me to be
'dutiful; I will obey you in every
'thing you can desire.'

Here he pressed my hand; and, after a
short silence, turning to my aunt, asked
who the person was on whom I had
placed my affections? 'He is,' said
she, (for here, Madam, I can't help re-
peating her words, she talked so char-
mingly) 'he is a young gentleman, of
'a family not inferior to ours; but this
'is a trifling circumstance when com-
'pared with his personal virtues. He
'has a noble dignity of sentiment, a
'generous and humane heart, a deli-
'cacy of soul that renders him equally
'beloved and admired. This, Sir, is
'the character I give of him; and
'I don't question, Sir, but you'll find
'it strictly just. If you enquire abroad,
'you will hear too of temperance, affa-
'bility, an engaging temper, and, in
'short, of all the virtues you would
'wish to see in a son-in-law.'—'I am
'sorry to hear it,' returned my father;
'it will then be so much the harder for
'my daughter to comply with what I
'have to propose to her. I have engaged
'my word to solicit her consent to mar-
'ry the son of one of my most intimate
'friends; and have assured him, that
'she pays so strict an obedience to my
'will, that he need not doubt of my
'success. He has a fortune superior to
'here, a circumstance that I cannot
'overlook; nor does he want any qua-
'lification to entitle him to the charac-
'ter of a worthy man, or a gentleman.
'Let me see now, Felicia,' added he, ad-
dressing himself to me, 'that you can
'obey my inclinations rather than your
'own; for I will not do you the injury
'to imagine, that you have so far en-
'gaged yourself without my consent, as
'to be unable to go back.'—'Sir,' re-
plied I, with my eyes fixed on the floor,
'I am all obedience. I never proposed
'to marry without your approbation;
'but let me at least beg that I may have
'time to conquer my heart, and subdue
'my rebellious inclinations. I will
'study to obey you, and do all in my
'power to render myself worthy your
'esteem.'—'This, my dear,' returned
he, 'is all I desire. It would indeed
'be a shock to decency and virtue, as
'well as the greatest injury to the man
'thou wouldst endeavour to render hap-
'py, wert thou forced into his arms,
'while thy tenderest affections were
'placed

placed upon another. But time, and the perfections of the gentleman I have chosen for thee, will, I hope, make that desirable change, which will be necessary to compleat the felicity of you both.

Could our happy reconciliation be concluded with a subject more capable of giving a damp to my rising joys, and to the exquisite satisfactions of filial affection! My heart, though dissolved in duty, felt the whole force of the last demand; and at the same instant that I gave up all power over myself, and consented to forsake my dear Lucius, he appeared present to my mind in all his charms, in all the radiant charms of virtue, drooping under his unhappy lot, while the tender languishment of his soul seemed to reproach my too easy compliance. But what could I do? Could I refuse any thing to a father, who had a right to demand every thing from me? No; that was impossible; I was then in a disposition to pay him the most rigorous obedience. Nor indeed could he have made any request that would have given me equal pain to grant: for wealth and splendour, and all the alluring gaieties of life, appear but trifles, when compared with the more important interests of our hearts. Love, in the very instant when I endeavoured to give up the soft, the tender passion, resumed its empire, and, in spite of all my resolution, flowed in upon my soul, and embittered the generous efforts of my duty; nor could I thus formally resign the extatick thought of spending my life with Lucius, without feeling some of the most cruel pangs. However, endeavouring to collect myself as much as possible, by recalling the pleasing ideas of our reconciliation, I assumed an air of ease and resignation; but as this was a situation very difficult to support long together, and as I found myself still disordered with the pain in my head, I seized the first opportunity of retiring to my chamber; where my supper being brought to me, I went to bed.

I shall not, Madam, attempt to describe the opposite passions I had to struggle with, now I was retired from company, and was at liberty to indulge all the various reflections that intruded themselves upon my mind. It is sufficient to say, that I felt a confused and disturbed mixture of pleasure and pain. But whether the reliefs I found from

the consideration of having regained the favour of an indulgent parent, together with the thoughts of the joy he felt at finding me still innocent, were more powerful than all the cause I had for uneasiness; or whether my spirits sinking, under the pleasing flow of those dutiful affections which I had indulged without restraint, made me more heavy than usual; I soon fell into a delightful slumber, which lasted till morning, when I found myself perfectly recovered from every indisposition: but the moment I opened my eyes, the dear idea of my lover returned again to my mind; while I recollected his air, his words, his gestures, the purity of his soul, and the sublimity of his virtues, all had a thousand winning graces; pleasing in the review, yet painful in the idea of their being nothing to me, since I must forget to admire, forget to love this dear engaging man, whom my heart represented as all lovely.

I was in this situation, Madam, when I wrote you my last letter, which I began as soon as I had slipped on my clothes, and which took me up great part of the day in writing; and indeed, though I then filled two sheets of paper with my scribbling, I ought in strict propriety to have carried it thus far. But my adventures come in such swift succession, that I cannot pretend to keep pace with them. I have a very interesting scene to relate; and as I foresee it will take up too much time for me to give it you now entire, I chuse to defer it till my next.

With my most humble respects to his lordship, I am yours, &c.

FELICIA.

LETTER XXI.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAD such a variety of painful and agreeable things remaining when I concluded my last, that it was with the extremest reluctance I found myself obliged, either to break off, or to give you such a loose general account of the changes in my affairs, as would be entirely uninteresting; or else, after having raised your curiosity, to break off, and give you the pain of waiting several days in a tedious suspense. But I have now an opportunity of continuing my story, without any of those inconveniences.

The day after that in which I was restored

restored to my father's favour, and lost to the pleasing joys of love, and all the flattering delights I had formed an idea of, the sweets of the most innocent sympathies, and the uniform transports of a blissful union of souls; the day after this important one, I say, I scarcely saw my father till the evening: for having, soon after I arose in the morning, tenderly enquired into the state of my health, he left us to spend the day with some neighbouring gentlemen. Upon his return we were all surprized to find him ruffled and disturbed by passion; and naturally enquiring what was the cause of his uneasiness, how great was my astonishment and concern to hear him tell me, that he had received the grossest insults from Lucius's father! 'Tis true,' said he, 'he was disordered with wine; but it is also true too, that he has affronted me in the presence of several gentlemen, in a manner that I can't help resenting. As I had given him no cause of offence, every body took my part; and, as is usual on such occasions, freely gave me an account of the several debaucheries of his life: he is guilty of every extravagance; and is, they tell me, just upon the brink of ruin. Can I think of being allied to such a wretched family! No, child, I must repeat my request, that you would never more entertain the least thought of his unhappy son.'

Though I had before hardly any hopes of ever obtaining Lucius, yet I could not hear this repeated injunction without feeling a great addition of pain. My father was now confirmed in his opposition to my desires, and had some reason to be averse to our union. Could I then entertain the least distant thought of a change in my affairs? I durst not even think it possible. I had not the least glimmering hope of ever being happy, unless I could erase from my heart the tender impressions I found thereof my dear Lucius, and that seemed as great an impossibility as that I should ever obtain him. I was so much struck with this thought, that I was hardly able to make an answer, and only replied—'I am extremely sorry for it, Sir; but if you knew Lucius, you would be far from thinking him guilty of his father's crimes, of which he is perfectly incapable: but I shall say no more; I will study to obey you.'

My aunt, perhaps, thinking this an improper time to vindicate my lover, as my father was not a little disturbed with passion, seemed to avoid entering into the subject. But Mellifont, who, as he was upon the point of being united to Amelia, had been fully let into the state of our affairs, and who was now present, could not help vindicating his friend with a warmth that greatly increased my esteem for him, and which I saw by Amelia's eyes was not much less pleasing to her: but all he could say had but little effect on my father; his most forcible arguments could not persuade him to believe, but that the vices of a parent must have some effect on the minds of his children. It is true he was not now in a disposition to hear reason, especially on a subject so opposite to the tumultuous state of his own mind, which had fixed prepossessions almost unconquerable. But he was soon in a better disposition; Lucius himself removed all his prejudices, and convinced him of his innocence, and in a happy moment inspired him with the highest esteem.

The next morning, as I lay longer than usual, I breakfasted in bed; a thing very uncommon in this part of the world, where, as I have told you, it is not unusual for fine ladies to rise with the sun. But I had scarcely drank my chocolate, when Amelia came running into my chamber, to inform me that Lucius was just come, and that he was now in a close conversation with my aunt. Seized with a sudden flutter and perturbation of spirits, I leaped out of bed, and slipped on my cloaths with as much speed as possible, at the same time asking her abundance of questions all in a breath; as whether he had seen my father? if he had informed him who he was? what passed between them? and several other things I was desirous of knowing: and so great was my impatience to be informed of these particulars, that I could hardly stay for an answer; I would be informed of every thing at once, and was almost angry at her making me lose the time of asking her. And was not this eagerness very natural, Madam? Indeed I could not help it; I acted merely from instinct. It was my heart that wanted to be informed; and the strange emotion I felt there caused such a swift succession of ideas, that every moment's delay seemed an age. Amelia talks with as much fluency as most people I

ever conversed with, yet I thought she dreamed out her syllables to an unnatural length; and though I was never dressed so quick in my life, I could not be persuaded that I ever was half so long about it. But I do not consider, that while I am describing my own impatience, I am still increasing yours. She told me that my father, not knowing who he was, had behaved with the politeness due to a stranger; and upon my aunt's saying he was one of her best friends, had even gone so far as to tell him, that he should be glad of the honour of his acquaintance; and that it would be a particular favour, if, now he was there, he would give him a few hours of his company.

'What a happy omen!' cried I. 'Is it possible? Are you sure he said so?' 'Well, and what else? Come, quick, my dear.' With what an ecstasy were these words uttered! 'What else, Madam,' returned she; 'what should he say else? He said nothing more, I assure you. You will easily imagine that Lucius accepted the proposal.'—'Well, but my dear Amelia,' returned I, with the same rapidity, 'are you sure you have told me all? Come, begin again, and don't forget the least particular.' Here Amelia, with a smile, did as I desired; only adding, that my father seemed agreeably surprized at Lucius's graceful manner of expressing himself. 'Did he?' cried I, with a fresh transport; 'how could you forget such a charming circumstance? But what, then, were Lucius's words?'

Thus I employed my time till I was ready to go down stairs; when reflecting that what I had considered as a subject of joy was but an airy vision, a delusion of fancy, since the ease and politeness of my father's behaviour to Lucius proceeded only from his not knowing him, my fears now returned with double weight, while my heart ached and fluttered with a painful palpitation, which increased at every step I took as I drew nearer my father and my lover. 'In what a terrible suspense,' thought I, 'is poor Lucius! How will he be able to make the important discovery? Important!' thought I again; 'how is it important, since it will only raise my father's resentment?' And the next moment I imagined I saw him pale and trembling at hearing my father's stern command to forbear his addresses. But these tor-

turing reflections were in a great measure put an end to by my entering the room, where Lucius, my father, and my aunt, were in full conversation on some indifferent subjects. Lucius, the moment he saw me, arose with a blush, and bowing low, seated himself again, and continued the conversation. What a strange concourse of wild and incoherent ideas now distracted my heart! My soul, filled with a confused agony, was scarcely able to attend to any distinct sensations; I was bewildered in a maze of thought. What a strange situation of mind! 'Is this the last time,' said I to myself, with a sigh, as soon as I was capable of giving the least order to my ideas, 'the last, the very last time, of my seeing this dear man? the last time that I shall hear his voice? that voice that has so often awakened all the powers of my soul to harmony and love! that voice which I have so often heard with rapture, while, as if all ear, I have hung upon his lips, and listened to the tender, melodious accents of his tongue! O how shall I support his absence! how tear myself from this dear person for ever! Never more to converse with my fellow mind, never more to hear and see his heart speak to me! To forget him; to forget the dear sympathies of love; to be ignorant of what passes in his breast—how hard the task! O duty, how rigorous are thy demands!—But 'tis resolved; and I will, I will obey.'

Had I not been seated in the darkest part of the room, and at the farthest distance from my father, it would have been impossible for him not to have taken notice of the disorder these cruel thoughts imprinted on my countenance. But I was soon diverted from these gloomy images by Lucius; who trembling, with a soft and timorous air, changed all at once the subject that had employed the attention of all in the company but me; and fixing his eyes steadily on my father—'You have professed an esteem for me, Sir,' said he, 'which neither my merit nor the small time I have been in your company can justify. I am quite unknown to you; you are ignorant that I have raised my ambitious hopes to the happiness of being allied to you: but, however you receive this confession, do me the justice to believe, that I have never presumed to harbour a thought of obtaining your daughter

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'without

‘ without your consent; I love her too tenderly to injure you, or to think of depriving her of your affection, by persuading her to forget her duty. You alone have a right to dispose of her; and, O Sir! it is in your power to render me happy or miserable!’ With what pain did he utter these words, and with what an earnest, beseeching look, were they concluded! As for my father, the moment Lucius, softening his voice, began to change the discourse, he started, and viewing him with an earnestness mixed with surprize, seemed to hear him with patience, and even let him conclude without once attempting to interrupt him; while I, swallowed up in attention, felt for some time a suspension of all thought, of all sensation and idea: my soul seemed a void; every passion was hushed; and every power waited the next words, to teach them how to act, and to set all in motion again: when my father replied—‘ I shall neither take upon me to enquire how far you have carried this regard for my authority, nor whether you are worthy of her affection. She is very dear to me; and I have chosen a husband for her every way capable of making her happy; you will oblige me, then, if you promise never to see her more.’—‘ Well, Sir, I cannot complain,’ returned he, with a trembling voice; ‘ this is no more than I ought to have expected. I must lose the lovely Felicia, then, for ever! Well, you shall be obeyed; whatever it cost me, you shall!’ Here he paused, as if unable to proceed; and then continued—‘ No, I’ll never be an obstacle to her happiness; she shall never more be made uneasy by my presence, nor tempted to disobey you by knowing my despair.’

O Madam, it was impossible for me to support the effects of such generous, painful sentiments! A flood of tender sorrow poured into my heart; my head grew giddy; a thick film in an instant overcast my eyes; and trembling and sick, while every thing ran round, I seemed sinking into death. My aunt perceived me, while my head was yet supported by the back of my chair, and my looks steadily fixed on Lucius; when observing my paleness, and crying out, ‘ Felicia is fainting!’ she ran to support me in her arms, just as I was ready to fall upon the floor. It was a considerable time, I believe, before I was

brought to myself; but being still very sick and low-spirited, my aunt advised me to be laid upon my bed; when Amelia supporting me by one arm, and one of the servants by the other, I was conveyed into my chamber, where I remained for some time in a state little better than that of an entire insensibility, during which my aunt was so kind as to keep me company, sitting all the while by my bed-side with a bottle of salts in her hand.

As soon as I had perfectly recovered my senses, and began to look about me, the first question I asked was, if Lucius was gone? but my aunt could not satisfy me. I then desired her to tell me how he behaved, and what impression my disorder had upon him; but she avoided answering my question, by saying—‘ Pray, my dear, don’t make these useless enquiries. As you must now endeavour to forget him, it would have but an unhappy effect to store your mind with thoughts that would only increase the difficulty of conquering your affection.’ But she had scarcely made this prudent reply, when Amelia came running into my room, and embracing me with an extasy of joy—‘ O, my dear,’ cried she, with tears starting from her eyes, ‘ Lucius has conquered; my uncle submits, and gives you up to your lover!’—‘ It is impossible!’ cried I, filled with an amazement that almost deprived me again of my just recovered senses. ‘ It is true! it is true! I assure you it is true!’ repeated she, with the same transport. Here my aunt checked her friendly ardour, which she feared might overpower my spirits; and forcing me to take a glass of wine and drops, to prepare me for what I had to hear, desired Amelia to relate every thing that had passed; when seizing her hand, I entreated her to make haste, but not to forget the least particular. She smiled at my eagerness; and with that satisfaction in her looks which always appears when a good mind has it in its power to confer an extraordinary joy, without any ceremony began thus—

‘ The moment my mamma ran to prevent your falling from your chair, Lucius cast his eyes upon you too; but he no sooner beheld you, my dear, in that frightful situation, than he appeared in a disorder very little different from yours; but immediately recollecting himself, he joined with my un-

cle

cle in using all his endeavours to recover you. He ran himself to fetch water, and gave it to your father, who sprinkled your face: he ran for more; he flew into the dining-room for my mother's smelling-bottle, then for some drops. In short, we had no need of any of the servants; he himself was more active than they all put together could have been, and did a thousand mean offices for you, if any thing can be called mean that is done for a person in such a situation. His life, his happiness, his all seemed at stake. And though he could not have the least hopes of obtaining you, his looks expressed a tenderness and solicitude that I could not help thinking even exceeded your father's. Though he durst not approach you with the same freedoms as he did, yet he stood behind him, with his eyes fixed on your faded cheeks, while the tears ran down his, that with his fright wanted little of being as pale as yours; but the instant your colour began a little to return, his came in proportion; and as his apprehensions vanished, his countenance entirely changed. You opened your eyes; we said you would recover; he was in a fresh transport, and seemed at that moment to have forgot that that was to be the last time of his seeing you. Ah, my dear Felicia, continued she, smiling, 'do you think Melifont, in the same case, would have expressed an equal tenderness for me? I can hardly believe it.'

'O, my dear Lucius!' cried I, shedding some extatick tears. 'But proceed.'—'Well,' resumed she, 'as soon as I came from helping you up stairs, having asked me how you did, he turned to my uncle, and giving him a supplicating look—"Since I must never more," said he, with a sigh, "behold your dear Felicia, permit me, Sir, to stay till she is come to herself. I don't ask to see her again; but—" "Enough, Sir," returned my uncle; "you may stay, and welcome; and I take this opportunity of thanking you for the service we have received from you in giving us your assistance: it was generous; and what, after the declaration I had made you, I had not the least reason to expect; but, instead of being reproached, I was to be obliged. My sister has done you justice in saying you have a mind very

different from your father's, and therefore I believe you will not vindicate his extravagances; and it is his character, more than any disparity of circumstances, that makes me averse to your having my daughter; but if you are an honest man, you will not justify him. The savage brute had——" "Who, Sir? what, my father?" cried Lucius; while I was surprized to hear the person who had hitherto spoke with such submissive respect, now assume a tone so resolute and lofty. "Yes, your father!" returned my uncle, as loud as he. "He insulted me, vilely insulted me, in the presence of several gentlemen, who turned him out of the room. They gave me his character; related many of his outrages; and convinced me that he is a debauched, abandoned fellow—a villain!"—"My father a debauched, abandoned fellow!" resumed Lucius, in the same tone; "my father a villain! Nothing but your near relation to Felicia could prevent my resenting the opprobrious epithets. Heavens! my father called a villain, and can I hear it with patience? O Sir," continued he, softening his voice, "spare my father!"—"Why, is it not true?" returned my uncle. "Is he not my father?" cried Lucius, interrupting him. "O Sir! can I have so little delicacy, so little sense of duty, or honour, as not to resent such language? Can I be a son, and yet so void of filial affection, as not to feel my heart rise with indignation, and every passion swell to justify my father?"—"Then you justify your father?" replied again my uncle. "I beg," returned Lucius, "you would not press this subject. You are Miss Felicia's father, and he is mine; I would therefore preserve a respect for you both. Mine has, I confess, his faults, but he has his virtues too. His faults I would conceal from all the world; I would bury them in eternal oblivion; I would blot them even from my own remembrance; I would wipe them from my thoughts, to save myself the preposterous shame of blushing for a parent. But yet, whatever he may deserve, I am sure I don't deserve to hear him treated so."

'My uncle here,' continued Amelia,

' sat fixed in admiration, while friend-
 ' ship and surprize were mingled in his
 ' looks. He was silent; he seemed at a
 ' loss for an answer: when, at last, giving
 ' Lucius his hand—"Your sentiments
 ' are admirable, Sir," cried he; "and
 ' I can't help thinking him very happy,
 ' in having in so generous a son so
 ' good an advocate. I beg pardon for
 ' my want of delicacy in shocking
 ' yours." Here hesitating a moment,
 ' with a friendly disorder in his counte-
 ' nance, that shewed him stopped by an
 ' affecting thought which he waited to
 ' indulge, he resumed—"But if a fa-
 ' ther, who has taken so little care of
 ' his family, can inspire in a son such
 ' tender duty, such noble friendship,
 ' how great would be that son's affec-
 ' tion, had he one who employed the
 ' whole bent of his soul in contributing
 ' to his felicity?" You can't conceive,
 ' my dear Felicia, continued she, ' how
 ' feelingly these words were expressed.
 ' Lucius himself, notwithstanding his
 ' disappointed hopes, seemed extremely
 ' moved with them; when, with a co-
 ' lour as red as scarlet, he hastily re-
 ' plied—"Twas in you, Sir, that I
 ' hoped to have found such a father.
 ' But why did I hope it?—that is now
 ' impossible—I shall see your dear, your
 ' charming Felicia, no more. It is
 ' true, my presumption in daring to
 ' love her is inexcusable: but I will try
 ' whether absence and philosophy can
 ' teach me to conquer my passion; if
 ' they cannot, I must be unhappy."
 ' Here he arose, with a visible confusion
 ' in his looks; and added, with a sigh—
 ' Pray send to know how she does, for
 ' I must retire."

' Lucius having taken a turn or two
 ' about the room, with a disorder that I
 ' don't know how to express, but which
 ' seemed to arise from his thinking he
 ' had said too much, by confessing the
 ' pleasure he had felt in hoping for a fa-
 ' ther of my uncle's virtue—for those
 ' words seemed rather to break from his
 ' heart than his tongue—Lucius, I would
 ' say, having taken a turn about the
 ' room, and finding my uncle make no
 ' reply to his desire of knowing how
 ' you did, opened the door, saying—
 ' Your, servant, Sir; I wish Felicia
 ' happy. I will send myself, to know
 ' if she is recovered." When, seeing
 ' him going, your father arose, desired
 ' him to stay a little longer, and told him

' he could not part with him so suddenly.
 ' Upon this your lover returned; and
 ' they both being again seated, af-
 ' ter a short silence, (for your father,
 ' my dear, continued she, ' appeared
 ' buried in thought) he resumed—"I
 ' confess, Sir, I admire your virtues,
 ' and am persuaded we shall part upon
 ' much better terms: pray let me know
 ' the circumstances of your family, and
 ' whether you have any estate in your
 ' own hands." Here I took upon me
 ' to reply, and endeavoured to give him
 ' the characters of Sophronia and Ma-
 ' rilla, which I told my uncle I could
 ' do with a much better grace than Lu-
 ' cius, as his modesty might be offended
 ' should he do justice to persons whose
 ' merit was so nearly allied to his, that
 ' he could not be supposed to praise them
 ' as they deserved, without reflecting
 ' great part of the honour upon him-
 ' self. But, my dear Felicia, this was
 ' not my real motive; I could not sit by
 ' and see such a charming reconciliation
 ' carried on, without desiring at least to
 ' have a small share in it. I had waited
 ' a good while to put in a word that
 ' might be of service to you, but could
 ' not find a better opportunity than that
 ' which now offered."

' Well, thank you, my dear, replied
 ' I; but pray proceed. You might have
 ' told me that to-morrow. Come,
 ' make haste.—Your father, Miss,
 ' continued she, ' appeared extremely
 ' delighted with what he heard; nor
 ' was he much less pleased to hear Lu-
 ' cius tell him that he had an estate,
 ' (which, though much less than yours,
 ' might serve to vindicate his giving
 ' him his daughter;) and indeed he was
 ' no sooner informed of these parti-
 ' culars, than taking Lucius's hand,
 ' with an affectionate smile, he cried—
 ' Your virtue, Sir, has conquered. I
 ' admire your sentiments, and approve
 ' Felicia's choice. I give you my
 ' daughter, and wish you both all ima-
 ' ginable happiness." With a rapi-
 ' dity as quick as thought, he now threw
 ' himself at my uncle's feet. He was
 ' unable to speak; he grasped his hand,
 ' wetted it with tears; and I having
 ' waited for a minute for some extatick
 ' rapture, and perceiving him still silent,
 ' flew to be the first messenger of this
 ' delightful news."

' O! cried I aloud, ' sure this is all
 ' a dream! Am I—am I so happy! so
 ' very

'very happy! Where is my father?
'where is my Lucius? I will run and
'indulge my fondness for them both.'
Then, seeing my aunt laughing at my
rapture, I flew into her arms, embraced
her, and then Amelia. 'Come,' con-
tinued I, 'let us go; I can't stay a mo-
'ment.' They humoured my impa-
tience, and all of us ran together into the
parlour. My father was standing with
his eyes affectionately fixed on Lucius,
who stood by him holding his hand, and
I suppose giving a loose to all the rap-
ture of a transported heart; when break-
ing from him, my father flew to receive
me with open arms. 'Come, my child,'
cried he, 'share in my satisfaction. I
'approve your choice. It shall now be
'this gentleman's study to render you
'happy.' Here having embraced me
with a tender affection, he took hold of
my hand; when asking Lucius for his,
he laid mine upon it, and then grasping
both together—'God bless you both, my
'children,' cried he, lifting up his eyes,
while the tears stole down his cheeks;
'God bless you both, and render your
'happiness eternal. Do you, my son,
'remember,' added he, still holding our
hands, while he suffered Lucius to close
his upon mine, with a tender pressure,
which my father rendered yet more
pleasing, by holding both ours between
his; 'remember, that as by your vir-
'tues you now arrive at the height of
'your wishes, so only virtue will render
'your happiness compleat and durable.'
Then turning to me, 'he proceeded—
'And do you, my dear, remember, that
'now all your felicity in this life de-
'pends on your pleasing Lucius. He is
'your own choice; and I command you,
'as you expect to be happy, never to
'mention, or by the least action let him
'think, that you believe him obliged
'to you for the great addition that, by
'your means, is made to his fortune.
'God bless you both, my children!' To
this my aunt and Amelia gave a hearty
Amen; when giving us an affectionate
shake, he let go our hands, and Lucius
embraced me with transport, while my
aunt and cousin drew near to congratu-
late us on this happy occasion. Their
eyes sparkled with joy, their faces glowed
with pleasure, and every word and every
look spoke the sympathy between their
hearts and ours. Wherever we turned

our eyes, the soul of happiness sat beam-
ing in every look; they beheld us with
the transport Mr. Thomson describes,
when he says—

" 'Twas friendship heighten'd by the mutual
" with,
" Th' enchanting hope and sympathetick
" glow,
" Struck from the charming eye. Devoting
" each
" To love."——

'While my father stood looking on, with
a superior degree of conscious pleasure in
his air:

" Supremely happy in th' awaken'd power
" Of giving joy."——

The evening was spent with pleasure
and delight. Sophronia and Marilla
were sent for, and bore a part in our
common satisfaction. And nothing
then seemed wanting to render our fel-
icity compleat. Yet I assure you, Ma-
dam, not all this delight could prevent
my anticipating the pleasure you would
receive from this happy news, nor erase
from my thoughts the remembrance of
how much I am your ladyship's most
obliged servant,

FELICIA

LETTER XXII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHILE I was reading yours.
every line of which expressed the
most generous and tender sympathy in
my distress, I could not help being ex-
tremely delighted with the thought, that
you were perhaps the same moment en-
gaged in perusing my last, where you
would learn, that you might freely ban-
ish all your fears, since I must now ap-
pear greatly above your pity. It was a
pleasing reflection, Madam; and I assure
you, I could not entertain myself with
the satisfaction you would receive on
this occasion, without feeling a great
increase of my own. Sure nothing can
be more natural than to share in the joy
we ourselves occasion; when self-love
and friendship both conspire to aid the
sympathetick delight; and to reflect back
the pleasure another feels from our hap-
piness.

But

But what a strange scheme! Could any thing be more extravagant! To send all my letters to my father, to open his eyes to the perfections of my lover, and to convince him, as you say, from those unguarded overflowings of my heart, that our passion has been hitherto carried on with the strictest regard to virtue, and all the obligations of duty. Really it was an excellent artifice to remove his prejudices; and, for what I know, might have been attended with success. I was present when my father received the parcel, and could not help being a witness of the surprize he discovered at seeing a large bundle of letters inclosed; when having given me that directed for me, and read yours to himself, he called my aunt aside, and smiling, retired with her to read their contents, while I was under little or no apprehensions of the consequence of having those tender transcripts of my heart discovered; for though I had entirely forgotten the contents of most of my letters, a consciousness of the sincerity of my duty kept my mind at ease, and, would not suffer me to fear that I had wrote any thing that could possibly offend him. But I had no sooner read yours, and indulged for a considerable time some of those pleasing thoughts due to friendship and you, than a sudden restless impulse of curiosity made me long to know what effect my letters had on those interested persons, my father and my aunt. I therefore arose, in order to attempt a discovery, which I had not patience to wait for till they made it themselves: I found them in my aunt's closet; and the door not being locked, I gently pushed it a little open, and saw them both seated with their backs towards me, with the escrutore, before which they were sitting, covered with papers. The good lady was listening to my father, who continued reading with a low voice, while she looked over him; but I had not stood a minute in this situation, when turning their heads so that I discovered half their faces, on which were imprinted some lively traces of satisfaction; they gave each other a glance, my father crying out at the same time, in a transport—'O the dear girl!' Elated with this tender exclamation, I took a step farther, and forgetting that I was only a kind of a spy, and ought therefore to be concealed, I pushed the door a little too

rudely, which grating against the floor, they both started, and turning their eyes to the plate from whence the noise proceeded, discovered me. I was now quite disconcerted, and you may be sure had an air not a little ridiculous, for my curiosity now appeared worthy of shame; and therefore casting down my eyes, was at a loss whether to go in or retire; but before I could determine, my aunt put an end to my embarrassment, by calling out—'What, Felicia! is it you?' 'I could be almost angry with you. We were reading your soul, it was talking to us; and here you, like a little impertinent, must come and interrupt the entertainment you yourself was giving us!' At this I boldly entered the room, when they both joining in their caresses, and I making some apologies, frankly confessed the motive of my coming, and the effect my father's goodness had in making me unattentive to the necessary precautions of being concealed. They laughed at my ingenuity; and having, at their request, brought them your letters, and placed them in the order I received them, I left them to their entertainment; and going down stairs, took a walk with Amelia in the garden, where we for some time indulged the pleasure of discoursing on each other's happiness. We then made a comparison between love and friendship; talked of you; and, in short, were very merry with your expedient for promoting my felicity.

O Madam! when our minds, after a dreadful storm that has threatened the wreck of all that is most dear and valuable, perceive themselves entirely at ease, and wafted by the cheerful gale of every pleasing passion, we find new charms in all around us; a thousand opening joys, that would otherwise pass unheeded, break in upon our souls, and contribute to heighten our satisfaction; we have a quicker taste for every new accession of delight; and filled with that complacency, which makes us look upon every thing with a smile, every object in return seems to smile upon us. And while we are in this situation, not only friendship and love wrap the mind in the most pure ethereal delights, but the glittering sunbeams, the balmy breeze, the verdant groves, and all the lavish bounty of nature, give us a sensible pleasure. O how sweet are the delights which Heaven has thus

thus prepared for mortals! But how much more exquisite are the charms of innocence and conscious virtue, which give a pleasing relish to all these natural beauties! Affliction and distress, unrankling care, and all the painful bitter gush of grief, the darksome shades of Providence! like the clouds and storms of Nature, roaring round the high-raised mountain, and echoing with a horrid yell through all her distant caverns, serve to beautify the variegated scene, and heighten the glow of her returning smiles. Our tears, "that rain of eyes," swell the humane blossom; the kindly shower cherishes the hidden seeds of virtue, opens the lovely foliage, and with the next returning sun the fresh budding graces stand confessed. But to return from this long digression, which I hope you will think not altogether impertinent.

At dinner I had the pleasure of Lucius's company, a happiness I now enjoy every day; when I took notice that my father, who could not yet have read half my letters, behaved with a peculiar complaisance, and treated him with a respect I had never observed before: and indeed, if his esteem and affection for Lucius increases, as it has done since our grand reconciliation, he may possibly be in greater haste to compleat our union than I desire he should be; for, between you and I, I begin to grow a coward, and am a little afraid of entering into the awful, awkward state, from whence, you know, as from the regions of death, there is no return. However, your example, and that of Amelia's, I don't doubt, will give me the courage necessary to go through the solemn ceremony with a pretty good grace. But I find my happiness makes me grow lazy; and as I have nothing now very material to add, shall conclude, yours, &c.

FELICIA.

LETTER XXIII.

DEAR MADAM,

MY father's affection for Lucius is now arisen to such a height, that I hardly know whether he or I have the greater share in his heart; they are become almost inseparable, and are united in a friendship that appears very extraordinary in persons between whom there

is such a wide difference with respect to age. He is perpetually at our house, and the company of the lover is pretty equally shared between the happy father and the still more happy daughter. Methinks this indulgent parent is more lavish of his caresses to me than usual; he is continually approving my choice, and giving me instructions to regulate my conduct by such rules as, he says, will render my felicity compleat. He has read to me several Spectators on this subject, to which he has subjoined many observations that have fallen within his own notice. And I assure you, Madam, it shall be my care to put all his wise maxims in practice. To study our own happiness, and that of those we love, is an affair of the utmost consequence; nor can we take too much pains in the noble employment, which is at once both our duty, our honour, and the source of the most solid and lasting joys. My soul is too delicate, and my tenderness for the amiable Lucius too sublime, to suffer me to think without pain on those little jars, those petty quarrels, which interrupt the felicity of some of the most happy pairs, and sometimes make breaches dreadfully fatal to their future repose. They are upon their guard as to things that seem of importance; but while their minds lie open to trifles, those trifles soon become affairs of the utmost consequence. To these little incidents we are continually exposed; and therefore, as my father says, they are much more to be feared than those that at first view appear of the greatest moment. However, the task which he hath inculcated cannot be very displeasing, since all his rules are perfectly agreeable to my inclinations, and only consist of such maxims as must, if observed, perpetuate our mutual felicity. O my dear friend! tell me—for you know—if there can be greater pleasure than that which results from the reflection of pleasing a person dearer, infinitely dearer to us, than ourselves! The grateful look, the kindling glance, the expressive glow of tenderness, silently shot from the thankful eye—O, can there be a greater reward, to soften the charming toil, if that can be called a toil that will gladden the heart we love? For this I will read and study, to enrich my mind; for this I will dress; for this I will plot new arts to please; while virtue, innocence, and truth, shall lead the way, and

and mark my path to lasting bliss. What delight the distant prospect beams upon my soul! My Lucius! my husband! my friend! Dear epithets! enchanting sounds!—sounds swelling with every thrilling joy! O, All-gracious Being! may my abilities be equal to the ardor of my soul! May the wife be lost in the friend; the soft, the tender, the generous friend!

These last thoughts arise in my mind whenever I entertain myself with the grateful subject of my father's instructions: but the pleasure I may be supposed to receive from these resolutions is extremely damped by abundance of intruding fears that dash my joy with a mixture of bitterness; I tremble lest, in the unguarded moments of my life, I should drop the guard I resolve to keep over my temper; lest I should forget to please, or lose the power of doing it. Thoughts that are always attended with pain.

You see what a fond, unfashionable creature, I am grown; but as your ladyship has given me some reason to believe that you are not less weak than myself, I boldly brave your satire; so that if you make merry with me on this occasion, I shall freely join in the laugh.

My happiness is now so great, that there seems nothing wanting but the consideration of it's being perpetual, to render it complete. Nor does Amelia's appear less exquisite than mine; we are surrounded with every laughing delight, every social endearment. The congratulations of our friends, the caresses of our parents, the tenderness of our lovers, and the pleasing sympathy in each other's felicity, all contribute to heighten our joy; while rapture itself grows more pleasing, by settling into a serene and most charming tranquillity. Every thing is prepared for the ceremony that is to unite us for ever to the dearest persons on earth; and next Thursday Amelia and I are to be hailed under the title of Brides, and initiated into the dignified state of venerable Matrons. And, between you and I, Madam, we both heartily wish these solemn doings over, for really they have something terrible in them that frights at a distance.

Thus far, Madam, I had written yesterday; at which time I had no other care than how to render Lucius and myself as happy as possible, except some

little intruding thoughts of the awkward appearance I should make at church, and those natural inquietudes which are apt to perplex the mind upon the view of an important change in our circumstances; all which were counterbalanced by abundance of most charming reflections. But the scene soon changed. Alas! what is life, but a perpetual round of vexations and disappointments! a rapid succession of intermingled pleasures and pains! These cares and these delightful thoughts soon vanished, they gave place to other cares of a more bitter kind, unmixed with the least thought that could alleviate their force, or still the tumult of my troubled mind.

Yesterday we had Mellifont's company as usual. The time passed away very agreeably; and though I had not seen Lucius all the preceding day, I felt little uneasiness on account of his absence. I knew if he was ill I should have heard from him, and therefore did not question but he was detained by some extraordinary business, which would be no sooner finished than I should see him again, with a satisfaction that would be greatly increased by our being deprived for a short time of each other's company. Thus, while anticipating the eagerness with which I fancied he would fly to me, the pleasure I should observe in his countenance, and the tender apologies he would doubtless make on this occasion, I recompensed myself for the loss of a present gratification, with the pleasing thoughts of the future: though Mellifont, Amelia, and even my aunt, could not help censuring him a little severely, while I took his part with a good deal of vivacity, and let them know that I did not think I had the least reason to be offended.

However, in the evening, I had the satisfaction of seeing him enter the court. My heart bounded with joy, and a sudden thrill of delight darted through every vein. He entered the room, he saluted me, but it was with such a kind of cold restraint, as at once alarmed and pierced my soul. I knew not what to think, nor how to behave. I felt an emotion which I know not how to describe, a painful flutter of spirits; when having made a short apology, by saying he had been detained by some affairs of the utmost consequence, he took his seat, and joined in the conversation, with a distraction that was too visible for me
not

not to take particular notice of it, while methought he had an air of constraint that seemed quite unnatural to him. He avoided looking at me; and whenever his eyes chanced to meet mine, he suddenly cast them down. O what could I think! could I imagine that he was grown perfidious, and that I had lost my empire over his heart? No, I could not believe it; I could not entertain a thought so injurious to the fair idea I had conceived of his truth and goodness. However, all that engaging frankness, which had hitherto appeared on his countenance, was vanished, and I was ignorant of the cause. 'Some strange event,' thought I, 'must have happened, in which I am greatly interested.' I was ready to imagine any thing, rather than that Lucius, my dear, dear Lucius, could be false.

At last, Mellifont and Amelia leaving the room, my aunt soon followed, and we were left together, without the interruption of company; a situation which I had longed for ever since I observed this restraint in his behaviour, though his coldness would not suffer me to take any measures to obtain this satisfaction. His eyes now softened, while drooping with some secret care, every feature had an air of reluctant languishment. His tenderness had a mixture of fear and compassion, and methought he even seemed to dread my reproaches. We both continued silent; his eyes were steadily fixed on mine. A sigh, a tear, escaped him. He held down his head, to stifle his sighs, to hide his tears. O how nearly did they touch me! what a violent emotion did they raise in my breast! my heart throbbed; a pang of grief and soft surprise struck through my soul. I longed to know the cause of what I saw, yet dreaded to ask it. When at last breaking silence—'O my dear Lucius,' cried I, unable to restrain my tears, 'tell me, for Heaven's sake, tell me what is the matter, what is it that disturbs you? I must know it. Have you a care that I have not a right to share with you? Let me know what dreadful misfortune it is that gives you this pain. Indeed, if I can, I will remove it.' At this I sighed and wiped my eyes; while he, with his still fixed on the floor, echoed back my sighs; when, as if struggling to conquer the glut of sorrow which choked up his voice—'O my Felicia! my dear, my lovely Fe-

licia!' said he, 'let me persuade you to forget me; I will never involve you in the miseries of our unhappy family.'—'What do you mean?' cried I, hastily interrupting him, and scarcely able to believe my ears, 'I don't understand you.'—'Alas! my dear,' rejoined he, in a sorrowful tone; 'you cannot be mine, I don't deserve—' 'How!' interrupted I again, stunned at his words; but immediately my pride helping me to recollect myself, I coldly rejoined, 'Well, Sir, just as you please.'

Here I was going to fling out of the room, when a sudden glance in a moment dispelled my indignation; while Love, with all its humbling powers, took entire possession of my soul. I saw him with his eyes greedily fixed on me; they overflowed with a melting softness, and at the same time sparkling through the crystal swell with awful dignity, seemed to express some great, some hidden purpose. Every degree of confusion was vanished, not the least tincture of shame remained. His countenance had an air of open frankness, and no other traces were visible there but those of perfect tenderness and soft regret. What could I now think? or what could I say? I perceived that there was some extraordinary cause that forced him to behave in this manner; I perceived (or at least I thought I did) that it was with reluctance he struggled against his love, and endeavoured to forget me; yet I flattered myself, that if I did but know the motive to this painful task, I should be able to give him some relief, and perhaps let him see, that there was no occasion for such a victory over his passions: yet, however glad I should have been to have heard his reasons, I had still too much pride to enquire into them; the shame of meanly stooping to desire to be informed of these particulars shocked me immediately; I saw plainly, that this would appear too forward, and too evidently express the difficulty I should have to overcome my tenderness.

These reflections, which glanced through my mind in a moment, kept me silent, and prevented my asking to be informed of what I impatiently longed to hear; when finding me still continue speechless—'You wonder, my dear,' said Lucius, 'and are at a loss to find arguments to excuse my behaviour; but, could I prefer my own happiness to yours, I might still be as blest as I

could wish; as blest as the most high-wrought imagination can conceive: I might barbarously consult my own felicity to the prejudice of your happiness and future peace of mind. But I love you more dearly than life, and therefore can never consent to involve you in my misfortunes. I will never be guilty of such baseness. O my dear Felicia! call not this a want of affection; rather think it the triumph of the most perfect love, the strongest proof of the most generous disinterestedness. But what will this cost me? In losing you, I abandon every earthly joy—I bid adieu to the most pleasing prospects, to the enchanting sweets of the most pure and virtuous——To see you no more!

At this moment my aunt's return put a stop to this moving discourse; when Lucius and I endeavouring to compose our countenances, he enquired if my father would return that evening, for he had been out all day; and being told he would, he promised to come the next morning early, to pay him his respects, and immediately left us.

In this situation I am at present. I form a thousand conjectures, each of which perhaps is groundless; and notwithstanding all my endeavours to penetrate the cause of this sudden change, am as much in the dark as ever. However, I must believe him sincere, and therefore cannot suspect that he wants a pretence to break his engagements. No, I am sure he tenderly loves me; it would be criminal to doubt it. But a few hours more will now discover the whole affair; till when at least I shall be your ladyship's most unhappy friend,

FELICIA.

P. S. The uneasy torment of suspense not allowing me to sleep, I could not think of any expedient to pass away the tedious interval till Lucius's return, so agreeably as in opening my heart to you: I therefore arose two hours before the rest of the family, and employed my time in writing you the above.

LETTER XXIV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I NOW send you two letters together, the dates of which will tell you in what order they are to be read. In the

first you find me plunged into fresh anxiety, into all the pains of disappointed love. In this you will see the cause of this mighty change, a great mind struggling between love and generosity.

About an hour after I had concluded the other letter, a servant came to tell me that breakfast was ready. I went down with a mind extremely perplexed; when, in spite of all my endeavours to assume an air of ease and gaiety, they perceived my disorder; but instead of enquiring into the reason of it, as I expected, only strove to divert my pensive thoughtfulness, by turning it into ridicule. At last, however, Lucius appeared, and by his presence put an end to their unseasonable mirth, which began to grow extremely painful. Breakfast was now over, and the dear youth desiring my father and I to favour him with our company, went with us into a room, where we had no reason to fear being disturbed; and having taken our seats, with eyes in which were intermingled an air of dignity, with the soft languishment of love, he cast a glance at me, and then fixing them on my father—'Sir,' cried he, 'I am now come to thank you for your unmerited goodness; and, by an ingenuous confession of my circumstances, to let you see, that I am unworthy of the happiness of possessing your daughter. Nay, Sir,' continued he, seeing him look astonished, 'I don't wonder at your being startled at an address of this nature; but since I cannot now marry her with honour, I must do you and her the justice to decline it.'

Struck dumb with surprise, my father at first seemed incapable of making a reply; he rivetted his eyes upon Lucius, who at the same time cast his eyes to the floor; his colour came and went, he knit his brows, while his countenance expressed a confused mixture of vexation, anger, and disappointment; when, at last, seeming to collect his scattered thoughts, 'What can this mean?' cried he; 'I desire you would explain yourself. What disadvantage can there be in your circumstances, that you ought not to have mentioned before? It was a base and ungenerous part to endeavour to engage my daughter's affections, and thus to carry things to the last extremity, when you knew you could not marry her with honour; and I don't doubt, but she will resent such treatment

Though this was expressed with all the bitterness of resentment, in his voice and air, yet it appeared to make but little impression on Lucius; only a modest, guiltless blush, flashed in his cheek, which seemed to arise from the indignant pride of injured innocence; when finding that my father, by his silence, waited for his answer—'I am sorry, Sir,' said he, in a bold and manly tone, 'to find you entertain so ill an opinion of me; but were I that ungrateful wretch you think me, I should deserve even greater reproaches than those you are pleased to load me with; Felicia's merit would then justify this warmth in an indulgent father: but I beg you would do me the justice to hear me; and I don't doubt but that, notwithstanding I may appear a more unequal match than ever, you will still think I deserve a place in your esteem. My misfortunes call for pity, and not resentment. I have chosen to be unhappy rather than to see my father exposed to the miseries of a prison. I have lost Felicia to save my father! Think, Sir, what a son must feel at the very thought of seeing a person whom nature, whom ten thousand obligations has bound him to love and revere, in a gaol, in a dark, unwholesome prison, excluded from the cheerful face of man, lingering out a wretched being in penury, while he enjoyed—— O! it is too much; affluence in such circumstances would be a curse, while nature would extinguish all the delight of love, and embitter it's most pleasing sweets. 'Tis true, I might have concealed my giving up my fortune to procure his liberty. I *might* have done it; and had I been base enough to injure your goodness, I *had* done it. I might in this case have confided in the generosity of Felicia's mind, who after our union might have excused my deceiving her, and have kept it a secret. But I could neither resolve to marry her in such wretched circumstances, nor to impose upon you. I had yesterday morning five thousand pounds; I have now but two, a miserable pittance to support the exigence of a family, born above the inconvenience of low life! for to this use it

O! Madam, had you but seen with what a flood of passion this speech was uttered, you would—I am sure you would have been extremely moved. He wept—and sure never did tears look so graceful on a manly cheek before! My father wept too, and I faster than them both; while he pursued, without interruption, the noble dictates of his generous heart, bursting into the incoherent language of tender distress. But I must be more particular with respect to my father: for Lucius had hardly began this apology, when the repentment which reddened in his cheek began insensibly to vanish; his features, before swelled with indignation, now sunk imperceptibly, and left only the soft traces of pity, blended with a wonder that seemed to arise amidst those generous sentiments which elevate the soul above itself. He appeared interested in every word the dear engaging youth uttered; nor did the broken sighs, which frequently disjoined them, the groans of his throbbing heart, the trembling accent of his voice, or the least change in his countenance,

seem to escape his notice. I saw it did not—with a secret joy I saw it; and rejoiced in the humanity of his heart, which made him pity the noble distress of my lover, at this moment more dear than ever. Never did the high-wrought images of even a fictitious tale present a scene so moving as this would have been to an indifferent spectator; the most insensible breast must sure have melted into softness, the driest eye have gushed into tears.

After Lucius had finished, there remained a silence which lasted near a minute—an awful, tender silence, which was only interrupted by a few heaving sighs; when at last my father smiling, with an expressive affection in his look—“ Indeed, Sir,” said he, “ I have been too hasty; you deserve to be pitied: but what strange magick do you find to soften me thus? I profess I have not shed so many tears these eighteen years; never since I lost Felicia’s mother, my dear Elmira. But I beg you would do me the favour, my friend,” added he, “ to give me the particulars of this affecting story.”

“ Oh! Sir,” resumed my dear Lucius, “ you have a right to demand every thing from me: and though no mercenary view can tempt me to betray Felicia into ruin; though I have not the least distant hope of ever obtaining her by this confession, which can have no other effect than to convince you that Heaven never designed her for me; the respect I owe you, and the desire I have to appear still worthy of your friendship, will make me give you all the satisfaction you can desire. Two days ago, as I was preparing to pay this lovely maid a visit, a messenger from my father, who went out pretty early that morning, brought me a note, by which I was informed that he was under an arrest from one of his principal creditors. What could I do, but instantly fly to him! I found him in the house of one of our dependants, with no other company than the officers who deprived him of his liberty. He received me with an air of dejected sadness; while his attendants, stepping to the door, left me at liberty to indulge the torturing anguish of my heart, by endeavouring to give him the comfort I wanted myself. “ Oh “ Lucius!” said he, seeing me enter, “ you see your father a prisoner!” This

“ was all he could say, before I sprung into his arms. I could not speak to him: we both seated ourselves on a bench near the table; when having cast his eyes upon me again, with an air of the deepest melancholy and distress, he gave me a particular account of the situation of his affairs; an account that filled my mind with distraction, yet in a great measure put a stop to that torturing hurry, that flutter of spirits, with which I had before cast about my thoughts to give him relief; since I was now sensible that there was but one way to save him, and that, at first view, gave the most violent shock to my soul. Oh! Sir, how hard, how intolerably hard it is to root out of the heart a passion like mine! You, Madam,” continued he, looking at me, “ appeared in that moment more charming than ever; ten thousand pleasing, distracting ideas, crowded upon my mind, and overwhelmed my senses in a mazy whirl of giddiness. My reason seemed departing, while my breast was torn between love and nature, between duty and the tender—too tender softness that melts, and charms, and swallows up the soul. Good God! what did I feel! The sigh, the tear, the unkind reproach from my dear Felicia, and all the distraction of her bosom, was felt with a double emphasis in mine: but I soon came to a resolution; the manner in which my father concluded the painful story of the situation of his affairs, fixed my wavering thoughts, called in my reason, and pleaded in his look, his air, his words, so strongly for duty, that it was almost impossible to resist its impulses. “ O Lucius!” said he, in a most distressful tone, “ You see I can have no prospect of relief—No; I have not the least hope, the least glimmering hope, of ever procuring my liberty.” Here pressing my hand, and giving me a look painfully affectionate—“ It is a melancholy thought,” continued he; “ the dreary horrors of a prison are extremely shocking; they disarm my resolutions, and make a coward of me! But I have nobody to reproach but myself. To be buried alive, to be for ever deprived of that wholesome air, which the meanest slaves breathe at liberty! Nay, don’t look so tenderly upon me!” continued he, pressing my hand again; and then

"then looking at me, with the utmost
 "excess of paternal affection, he added,
 "Will you not come to see me?" I
 "could bear no more: these last words
 "pierced through my soul. "Don't,
 "pray don't, Sir, distract me with these
 "dreadful thoughts," interrupted I;
 "you shall not go to prison—I am re-
 "solved you shan't."—"What do you
 "mean?" returned he; "I must. I
 "have no friend to assist me."—"What
 "am I then?" cried I; "you shall not,
 "if my life or fortune can prevent it.
 "I will not, I cannot see you so wretch-
 "ed!"—"Mention it no more," re-
 "turned he, "I won't hear of such a
 "proposal. Your whole fortune would
 "scarcely be sufficient. No, no; you
 "shan't ruin yourself for me. I will
 "not purchase my liberty at so dear a
 "price as your happiness. Think what
 "it is you propose; think of Felicia.
 "Ah! that name will surely call you
 "back to reason; you need but consult
 "your own heart to find that it is she,
 "not I, that must render you happy.
 "Leave me then to the miseries I have
 "brought upon myself. Death will
 "soon put an end to them all. But O!
 "how painful is this situation, in which
 "death, so terrible to nature, is my
 "only relief! A relief do I call it?
 "Would it be a relief to me? No, I
 "fear not; there is something after
 "death more dreadful than death it-
 "self, more terrible than all I suffer.
 "O how happy is the virtuous man to
 "whom the grim monster appears with
 "an angel's face, with the smiles of
 "immortal beauty! To me it is covered
 "with a dreary gloom that shoots terror
 "through my soul! But when you are
 "happy, Lucius, think of me; visit
 "me in my grave, my prison."—"O
 "my father! my dear, dear father!"
 "cried I, interrupting him again,
 "Why will you not hear me? Why
 "do you give way to such cruel
 "thoughts? Shall I not have the li-
 "berty of disposing of my own? I have
 "already thought of what I lose in for-
 "saking the gentle Felicia. I know
 "my felicity is interwoven with hers.
 "I know that our marriage, on which
 "the happiness of my life depends, will
 "never be concluded, yet I have made
 "my choice. There is something so
 "horrible in the apprehensions of seeing
 "you a prisoner, that I cannot bear to

"think of it. There are no circum-
 "stances, in which such a misfortune
 "to you would not render me wretched.
 "Are you not my father, and shall
 "not nature plead for you? Do you
 "think me a son, and yet believe me
 "capable of struggling against my
 "duty?—my duty to my father?—a
 "father from whom I have received
 "numberless obligations, that call for
 "returns of gratitude and love? Think
 "what my mother will feel, when she
 "hears of your distress; and though I
 "have not the power to shake your re-
 "solutions by my entreaties to accept
 "of what I offer you, let her tears, let
 "her despair, touch your heart. Marilla
 "too will be distracted with grief; and
 "I know her so well, that were she of
 "age, she would gladly make you the
 "same offer that I do now. Indeed,
 "Sir, we can none of us feel more
 "misery than in seeing you miserable."
 —"Good God!" cried my father,
 "with uplifted hands, "teach me how
 "to act. Never did my conduct, in
 "my calmest intervals of reflection,
 "appear so black as it does now. O
 "Lucius! I am ashamed of thinking
 "how I have injured you. Your kind-
 "ness is more insupportable than all
 "my sufferings. How severely does
 "all this goodness reproach me! this
 "undeserved goodness! It touches me
 "to the quick; it makes a monster of
 "me!"—"I beg pardon, Sir," re-
 "plied I, "if I have done any thing to
 "occasion these cruel reflections. In
 "serving you I only do my duty."—
 "But ah! it is a painful duty," inter-
 "rupted he; "I know it is; your for-
 "tune is your smallest loss. If I accept
 "of it, I deprive you of Felicia's for-
 "tune too; and, what is infinitely worse
 "to a mind like yours, I deprive you
 "of Felicia! I might have given you a
 "splendid estate; but, instead of that,
 "to—O! how unlike a father, who,
 "instead of a curse, ought to be a bless-
 "ing to his family! My conduct has
 "been an outrage against nature, a
 "violation of the dearest privileges of a
 "parent; I have forgot the obligations
 "of the husband, the father, and the
 "friend. Thy mother too! How miser-
 "able have I made her! I have been
 "the ruin of all who have loved me;
 "the ruin of my wife and children—
 "the ruin of thee! Sad effect of vice!
 "how

“how dearly do I pay for my folly and
“madness!”

Here he paused; and, I dare say, it is not difficult, Madam, for you to imagine the tender, the generous, the noble sentiments, the relation of this affecting contest produced. Methought there was something so heroick, so dutiful, and so disinterested, in this part of his behaviour, that I could not help secretly applauding him. But now my father let me see that he was of the same opinion as myself, by openly discovering his sentiments: for Lucius no sooner gave him leave to speak, by a pause in which he seemed to recollect himself, than my father, as if eager to put him out of his pain, took hold of his hand, and giving it an affectionate shake—“Generous youth,” cried he, “this was nobly done! You are more my son than ever. I shall think myself happy in being allied to a person of such worth. How greatly do these tears become you! this soft adoption of another’s sorrow: this excess of humanity, which the savage mind cannot (or at least will not) feel, is the truest mark to know the brave, the generous heart by. Actions like these give a perfect insight into characters; and while they add a dignity to the highest stations, they spread a lustre that can never be equalled by all the pride of wealth, the pomp of titles, or the false glitter of successful ambition. Dear Lucius! how happy will my daughter be in so worthy a husband!”

This was uttered in that peculiar tone in which we always express ourselves, when the full heart, burthened under its joy, breaks forth into an unrestrained transport, into elevated surprise and generous affection. While he spoke, the tears started afresh into his eyes, and added an endearing tenderness to the smile of gladness which enlivened his countenance. His soul beamed in his looks, and discovered a mind softened, delighted, and raised above itself; while I dwelt upon each word he uttered, and with a most charming extasy assented to the justice of his praises. As to Lucius, he seemed all this while as if awaking from a troublesome dream; while surprise, gratitude, and a modest joy, dispersed the clouds of despair which hung on his brow. He looked at my father, he looked at me: the same passions were

visible in both our faces, only I fancy mine had an air of greater softness. He then turned his eyes again to my father, and pressing his hand—“I am amazed, Sir,” cried he: “What can this goodness mean? Can you really propose to marry Felicia to a person without a fortune? to one sunk into indigence? Sure it is impossible! Have you forgot that our family depends upon my support? and can you resolve that Felicia’s estate, instead of being augmented by her marriage, should be applied to remove foreign cares, and foreign wants?”

“Come, come, Lucius,” returned my father, smiling, “don’t exaggerate the disadvantages of your circumstances. This last instance of filial piety shews a greatness of soul, that not only fills me with surprise, but extremely endears you to me. The better I know you, the more I admire your virtue; and, to be as little behind you as possible in point of generosity, I promise not only to consult your felicity, but the happiness of all that are dear to you. But pray proceed; for I long to know the conclusion of these affecting incidents.”

“Dear Sir,” cried the engaging youth, with a sparkling joy swelling into rapture; “dear Sir, teach me how to acknowledge your goodness; I would be grateful, but yet cannot express my gratitude. My heart feels it all; feels it too sensibly to be expressed. O my dear, my lovely Felicia!” cried he, arising hastily, running to me, and giving me an eager, affectionate embrace; while my father could not forbear laughing at this natural transport, this sudden impulse of affection; nor could I help being extremely delighted with it. With extasy he pressed my hand to his bosom; his eyes spoke unutterable things. But having indulged for near a minute this sudden transport of joy, he returned to his chair, and concluded the story of his father’s misfortunes; but he neither sufficiently entered into the subject, nor dwelt, as before, upon the most melting circumstances. His own past sorrow and his father’s were swallowed up by the joy of the present moment. He told us that, after many arguments, his father at last consented to his proposal, but not without the severest reproaches upon the madness of his own conduct. His creditors

creditors were sent for; when offering a handsome composition, which was readily accepted, their affairs were concluded the next day: and, in short, that his misfortune, with the tenderness of Sophronia and Marilla, had wrought the most happy change in his conduct; a circumstance which, as it gave Lucius the highest pleasure, he mentioned with peculiar satisfaction.

As soon as he had done, my father renewed the friendly proofs he had given him of his affection, and promised to use

his endeavours to make us as happy as possible; so that, before dinner, we were more firmly united than ever. What a delightful change in our affairs! In two days more, my circumstances and manner of life will be changed; so that, when I write next, you will find me in a different class of mortals: but in whatever state I may be, if you do me justice, you will believe me to be unalterably yours,

FELICIA.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LETTER TO CHRISTIANITY

My dear Sir,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours, &c.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours, &c.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours, &c.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours, &c.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours, &c.



FELICIA TO CHARLOTTE.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

LETTER XXV.



YOU wonder, Madam, at my silence; but the continual persecution of a number of visitors has, for some time past, deprived me of every opportunity of retirement: so that, unless I could have found in my heart to have sent you a letter, with only *Madam*, at the top; *I am married*, a little lower; and *your humble servant*, at the bottom; I was indispensably obliged to defer writing till I could find leisure to be more particular.

My story, Madam, is now finished: I have been married these three weeks; and, from the serene tranquil state I am in at present, you have no reason to expect any more romantick adventures. I have nothing now to do with the affecting scenes of fond distress, the pangs of jealousy, or the fears of incurring a father's displeasure. My life begins to move on in an even stream, my passions are all hushed into a sweet serenity: regularity and order, peace and tranquillity, have taken up their residence in our happy dwelling. Can I give you, my dear friend, a more perfect picture of the highest degree of conjugal felicity, or represent a happiness more intensely charming? It is true, my husband—O the awkward name!—has no right honourable titles to grace my story, and give a dignity to my newly-acquired station; but this is an honour that I can freely resign to you without the least degree of envy; nor will your ladyship think me stupid, though I tell you, that

I never in my life had an ambition of this kind. These all-potent words, these ravishing sounds of dignity, these pompous syllables, so full of nameless charms, after which so many sigh and languish in vain, appear of no moment: and I am as content with the homely title of Mrs. *Manly*, as any other person can be with the more distinguished epithet of *my Lady*. But whither am I rambling? Don't you think matrimony has turned my brain? I have been preaching so long upon my humility, that I had almost forgot I was to give you an account of my affairs. To return, then, at last, to my story.

The day before I was united to my dear Lucius, by those indissoluble bonds which render our happiness as secure as our lives, his father came to pay us a visit. We received him with that deference which is due to so near a relation; while his reformation greatly heightened the respect my father thought himself obliged to pay him. And indeed, whatever follies he had formerly been guilty of, he did not at this time want any qualification to recommend him to the esteem of a good man; for his sentiments now shewed that he deserved it. He is really a gentleman of fine sense, of an easy agreeable address, and one that perfectly knows the world; nor does he seem to have wanted any natural advantage for making a shining figure in it. As all my father's prejudices were now removed, they soon grew intimate; and Mr. Manly expressed his acknowledgments for my father's generosity to his son, with all the gratitude that could be inspired by the tender overflowings of

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paternal affection; while my father returned his compliments with an air of the utmost complacency and satisfaction. How much does a man of fine sense lose by his vices! His abilities, which raise him above his neighbours, are either entirely suspended, or render him more ingeniously infamous, more generally hated and despised; but he is no sooner reformed, than, if his reason is not impaired by brutal indulgence, and a continued debauch—which, alas! is too often the case—his new-recovered virtues, polished by repentance, blaze out with a double lustre, and receive unutterable graces from the sudden sublimity of his conceptions.

Mr. Manly's acknowledgments were, however, too grave for the present situation of our affairs, and affected us, as well as himself, too much, for us to suffer him to proceed. We, therefore, as soon as possible, gave a turn to this part of the conversation; and Lucius, Mellifont, and Amelia, entering the room immediately after, prevented it's being resumed, and, at the same time, recovered that cheerfulness which had been interrupted by this too tender subject. The countenances of all our friends had an air of gaiety, which broke out into decent mirth; while Amelia and I were, by far, the dullest part of the company. They at last retired; when my good friend attending me to my chamber, and seating herself by me—'How is it with you, Felicia?' said she, smiling. 'I must confess myself a sad fool; for though no conversation could possibly be more engaging than that in which we have spent the day, I have wished a thousand times for an opportunity of being alone. Methought I wanted to indulge at leisure my own thoughts; though, I can assure you, they were none of the most agreeable. My spirits have been strangely oppressed; and, notwithstanding my endeavouring to join in the discourse, I have been every moment at church repeating after the parson, and thinking what a silly awkward figure I shall make there to-morrow. Bless me! what a coward am I grown! I shall certainly behave like a natural.'—'O, never mind it,' replied I, with a malicious pleasure, at finding her as weak as myself; 'depend upon it, I shall keep you in countenance.'—'I am so terrified at the solemnity of the cere-

mony, that I heartily wish it was over. I dread it as something mighty formidable, and can hardly think of it without trembling.'—'But suppose now,' added I, 'we should take the pains to read it over together?'—'Agreed,' replied she, running into my closet, and returning immediately with my prayer-book: 'Come, let us begin,' added she, 'it will be more familiar to us to-morrow.' Here we began, making our remarks as we proceeded. In short, we read over the whole ceremonial with the utmost attention; which, as we lengthened it out with abundance of comments, and little disputes upon some particulars which we did not understand, took up a considerable time.

Having now gratified our curiosity, we wished each other a good night, and Amelia left me; but she was hardly out of my room, when returning with a smile on her countenance—'I am come,' said she, 'to ask your consent to let me lie with you. I am persuaded, that we are neither of us in a disposition to give way to sleep. The hours would pass on very heavily, were we alone; let us then divert ourselves as agreeably as we can.'—'With all my heart, my dear,' said I, extremely pleased with her proposal: 'we will indulge our reflections with the greatest freedom.'

Upon this we undressed, and went to bed. But I will not trouble your ladyship with the various topicks of our discourse; it is sufficient to say, that we talked till morning, when, shaking off the drowsiness that then began insensibly to steal upon us, we arose; but had hardly finished the agreeable task of dressing each other, when somebody rapping softly at the door, Amelia opened it, and our two lovers appeared. They saluted us with an air of transport; telling us, that as they had seen us at the window, they could not forbear coming to wish us joy on the arrival of this happy morning. 'This, my dear,' said Lucius, 'is the day from whence I shall date the completion of my happiness; a day, that, I hope, we shall neither of us ever think of without delight. O my Felicia! how happy are you going to make me!' Here he gently pressed my hand, and gave me a look so extremely tender, that I could not help banishing every impertinent thought, to share in his transport; I even returned the charming pressure, and squeezed his hand,

hand, with a freedom I had never indulged before. 'Sure,' said I, 'this must be a happy union, where both so ardently wish to promote each other's felicity!'—'O my dear!' cried he, in an extasy, 'how shall I merit this sweet excess of goodness!'

Mellifont, I suppose, was entertaining Amelia in the same passionate strain; but I was not at leisure to attend either to their words or behaviour; however, I remember that they both looked extremely pleased. We went down to breakfast; when Mr. Manly and my father joined with my aunt in the most affectionate wishes for the continuance of our happiness; at the same time letting us know that a coach was ready to carry us, as soon as we had drank our chocolate, to a small village, at a few miles distance, where a clergyman waited to join our hands.

At the mention of the coach and clergyman, my uneasiness returned. I trembled, as if afraid of the awful ceremony; while Mellifont, drawing the common prayer out of his pocket, which he had found in my room, and taken up unobserved, increased my disorder, by shewing my father in what place he found it open upon the table. This was a circumstance which created a deal of mirth among the old people; who, however, unanimously agreed that we could not have spent our time better, than in thus studying the nature of those engagements we were going to enter into: to which my aunt added—'Indeed, I think my niece and my daughter ought to be commended, instead of being laughed at; for, as marriage is one of the most important steps we can take in life; since our happiness, both in this and a future state, in a great measure depends upon it; they could not, at this time, have employed their thoughts on a more interesting subject, than the solemn promises by which they are going to bind themselves.'

Several other things were said upon the same subject, which took up good part of the time we were at breakfast; and we were just ready to step into the coach, when Mellifont, to my no small satisfaction, proposed our sending for the clergyman to perform the ceremony here. Lucius casting a glance at me, to see if I approved the motion, immediately seconded his friend; and, though my

aunt disapproved of it, as a thing uncouth in this part of the country, we had the happiness to carry it against her, by my father's joining on our side. We, therefore, took our seats again, and one of the coaches was sent away for the reverend gentleman.

I shall not attempt, my dear friend, to repeat the chat that filled up this interval. I was in a very odd situation; but in less than two hours time, we were informed that the coach was returned, and soon after saw the divine enter the room, accompanied by Sophronia and Marilla, who had waited for us at church. The glass having gone once round, we arose, and went into a back parlour facing the garden; I, trembling with fear, held by my father's arm, and Amelia by my aunt's; when cushions being brought in, the solemn service began. But it would be impertinent for me minutely to describe my behaviour on this occasion, which, however, was not altogether so ridiculous as I expected; only this I must say, that I repeated the words, *honour and obey*, as distinctly as the rest: nor did Amelia, any more than I, scruple to pronounce those formidable sounds. My heart readily assented to every thing: my whole soul was lost in devotion, and every faculty of it employed in the service.

You find, Madam, I am now entered into the venerable state of wedlock; but, whatever change I have undergone in my manner of life, I do myself the honour to assure you, that I was never more, than I am at present, your ladyship's sincerest friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXVI.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR congratulations on our marriage are so very obliging, that I cannot defer my acknowledgments without deserving the imputation of ingratitude, a crime that my soul most abhors; and therefore, as I am as sensible as possible of your goodness, I embrace this first opportunity of telling you so. O my friend! what a sweet addition do your praises give to the few ret applause with which I regard my happy choice! Lucius is, indeed, worthy of all you have said in his favour; his mind

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is truly noble, and all his soul as much the object of my admiration as my love.

In my last, Madam, I broke off a little abruptly at the conclusion of that solemn ceremony which initiated me into a different class of mortals: but, as I have several things to relate, which, I flatter myself, may serve to amuse and entertain you, I will now resume the thread of my story.

When all was over, my heart, which had hitherto been extremely oppressed, began to beat more freely. Lucius embraced me, and, with eyes filled with a melting softness, cried—'Now, my dear, I may be so happy as to call you my wife. Dear name! may you never think of it without pleasure!' The rest of the company embraced us in their turn; and paid us the grateful compliments which burst from hearts struggling under an excess of affection and tender joy. Nor did Lucius's father, who had given away Amelia, appear less affected with our common happiness than mine. In short, every face glowed with satisfaction, while they strove to outdo each other in their caresses and testimonies of regard.

We now adjourned to another room, where a side-board was set with wines and fruit; when my aunt insisted upon my drinking a glass to raise my spirits, which Amelia, after my example, complied with. The clergyman, who is one of the most facetious gentlemen upon earth, told us abundance of agreeable stories, with so much humour, that he frequently set the whole company in a laugh; nor could Amelia and I forbear joining in the general mirth. We insensibly returned to ourselves; and, before dinner, were able to bear a part in the conversation. The reverend divine filled his pipe, had a tankard of old October to himself, and, by his wit and good temper, let us see that he did not think an innocent mirth at all inconsistent with the strictest piety. And it is worthy of observation, that, notwithstanding the extraordinary gaiety of the gentlemen, not the least word escaped them on this occasion, that could offend the chastest ear. Lucius and Melifont were in high spirits; but our fathers appeared transported above themselves; they had a peculiar satisfaction in their looks, while every gesture and every glance expressed the glad heart of

a fond parent. But these are things too delicate to be described. Sophronia and my aunt had much the same elevated joy, which, whenever they endeavoured to express it, seemed too big for utterance. What a delightful circumstance, to think that our happiness is diffused, in so charming a manner, to those who are most dear to us!

Dinner being over, and the servants ordered to withdraw, my father presented Lucius with the writings belonging to the greater part of his estate. 'As I have given you the person of my daughter, and intrusted her future felicity in your hands,' said he, with an air of open confidence, 'I make no scruple of giving you the unlimited possession of what is less dear to me. It would be an injury to you, my son, (for now I may have the pleasure of calling you by this affectionate name) and shew me too little moved by your noble and generous sentiments, should I make you depend on my daughter for the enjoyment of any of the elegancies of life. I, therefore, with the greatest satisfaction, rely on your virtue and prudence to manage the estate, which, as the husband of my Felicia, you have a right to partake of, in such a manner as to promote your mutual happiness.'—'Dear Sir,' said Lucius, interrupting him, 'you are pleased to oppress me with your goodness; but, while I would express my grateful acknowledgments, I must beg you not to straiten yourself, to add—' 'No, no,' interrupted my father, in his turn, 'you need not give yourself any pain on my account. I have reserved to myself an easy competence, sufficient to support the character I have always borne in life, and to supply all the exigences incident to the decline of it. A parent, in my opinion,' added he, smiling, 'should never be so profuse of his wealth, as to deprive himself of the capacity of living as he pleases without the assistance of his children; and, indeed, none that deserve this indulgence can be pleased with seeing such a preposterous, such an unnatural dependence. I consider you both as my children, your interests are now become inseparable; and, therefore, I have made no reserve for my daughter: the convincing proofs I have received of the greatness of your mind, make all such precautions

'precautions unnecessary. Nor will Felicia, I am persuaded, be displeased that I have given all to you.'—'Why so, Sir?' interposed I; 'do you really think it no mortification to refuse me the pleasure of doing justice to Mr. Manly's merit, by giving him so considerable a proof of my regard, as it would be, to make him a present of a fine jointure, as soon as I had it in my possession? How many agreeable things might I have heard him say to me on this occasion! But,' seriously added I, 'I am altogether as well pleased as it is; and I assure you, you could not have given me greater pleasure than you have now done.'

The unexpected vivacity of this reply caused a general smile. Lucius bowed his head, and seemed particularly pleased with it; indeed, he had reason to be so. His looks shewed that he was charmed with my father's behaviour; for, though he had been sensible that he really gained nothing, by this instance of his confidence, in his integrity and affection to me; yet, as it was an agreeable proof of the great share he had of his esteem, it could not fail of giving him the highest satisfaction. We now joined in the warmest expressions of gratitude to this indulgent parent; whilst I, much less embarrassed on this occasion than this dear man, endeavoured to find terms capable of expressing, in some measure, the fulness of his heart.

My father put an end to our acknowledgments, by turning to my father-in-law, and making him a present, answerable to the goodness of his own disposition. It was a little estate of about two hundred a year, which is to return to us after his and Sophronia's decease, and which they did not receive without thanking him with tears of gratitude; but in the moment when they seemed labouring under a surprize which struck them dumb, and rendered them incapable of expressing themselves, Mellifont, who had left us a few minutes before, returned, and, desiring to know if we had done with business, introduced a band of musick; and, by this means, prevented those affecting acknowledgments, which, however agreeable, are always attended with some pain. The day was spent in innocent gaiety and mirth, and with that peculiar satisfaction which the happy occasion was

adapted to inspire, amongst the most intimate and cordial friends.

The next morning, while we were at breakfast, my aunt told us, that she expected a visit from some of the neighbouring gentlemen and ladies, to congratulate us on this happy union. 'Some of them,' added she, laughing, 'as they affect to appear men of wit, will, I don't doubt, be fond of displaying it, in a manner that will not be very agreeable to the modesty of either my niece or daughter; and, therefore, to save their blushes for the present, suppose they should take an airing till dinner?'—'I was just going to make the same proposal,' said my father, 'though from a different reason. The day is exceeding fine, and I should be glad of the pleasure of Mr. Manly's company, without the fear of having our conversation interrupted.' Lucius thanked him for the honour he did him; and the coach being soon ready, we stepped in, leaving Mellifont with Amelia, who promised to follow us; we having before let them know the road we proposed to take. My father began the conversation, by the most tender expression of his affection. 'My dear Felicia,' said he, 'how great is my joy to see you so happy! You are married to a man of sense and probity; to a man, whom I shall love as a son, and esteem as a worthy friend. I wish you could both know how happy a father you have made me.'—'Dear Sir,' said Lucius, 'I have not words to express the least part of that gratitude I feel for your goodness. Your happiness, as it arises from ours, ought to increase it too. I love you, as the tender father who gave me being. You are more than a father, you give me happiness.' Here he took hold of my hand; and then looking again at my father—'O Sir,' continued he, with a full heart, 'let me thank you for this, the dearest of all your gifts!'

'You are very welcome,' replied my father, with a smile; 'I hope my daughter will prove herself worthy of such a husband. May God bless you both! You are now entered into a new scene of life, the very different cares, the different duties of which, require the exercise of very different abilities. My dear Lucius, I approve your humanity, that benevolence which will naturally

'turally prompt you to pity and relieve
 ' the distressed; but even this affection,
 ' amiable as it is, is one of the most
 ' dangerous of all that the mind of man
 ' is sensible to. There are faults which
 ' arise even from goodness of heart,
 ' faults attended with worse conse-
 ' quences than those of cruelty and
 ' brutal ill-nature. Pity has ruined
 ' thousands, men of the most refined
 ' sense, and of the greatest abilities; and
 ' when these are ruined, the ignorant
 ' and the ill-natured, proud of an op-
 ' portunity of revenging the superiority
 ' of their acquired endowments, are sure
 ' to treat them with double contempt.
 ' And indeed, men of great humanity,
 ' though of the best sense, frequently
 ' err in the plainest cases; even where
 ' one, but a degree above a natural,
 ' would not be deceived. This appears
 ' strange, yet it is an observation con-
 ' firmed by daily experience. These
 ' are, frequently, not only the worst
 ' economists, but they are drawn into
 ' the weakest and most childish engage-
 ' ments, where inevitable ruin is almost
 ' the natural consequence. Yet the rea-
 ' son of this is, perhaps, not hard to
 ' discover. Those persons whose
 ' thoughts are taken up with refined
 ' speculations, commonly know but
 ' little of the world; they may be ver-
 ' indeed, in prudential maxims, but
 ' there will always be a vast difference
 ' between these and truths founded on
 ' experience. A man of an open, be-
 ' nevolent disposition, while conscious of
 ' the integrity of his own heart, is less
 ' inclined to suspicion than others of
 ' more contracted views; he loves to
 ' think well of mankind, and frequently
 ' thinks better of individuals than they
 ' deserve. But when pity has taken pos-
 ' session of the heart—pity, a passion so
 ' nearly allied to love, that, like it, it
 ' banishes from the mind every inju-
 ' rious idea—it is almost incapable of su-
 ' spicion; it reflects not on possible con-
 ' sequences; or, if these do arise in the
 ' mind, they pass away unregarded,
 ' and make too slight an impression to
 ' prove effectual. The man of huma-
 ' nity finds it much easier to act from
 ' passion than from reason; he is pressed
 ' forwards by the impulse of a lively
 ' imagination, filled with the advan-
 ' tages that will attend the distressed per-
 ' son on his compliance with his desires;
 ' and therefore, when he is solicited from
 ' without, and, at the same time, prompt-

' ed from within, by the impulses of a
 ' generous and affected heart, there is
 ' no wonder if he finds a difficulty in
 ' saying *no*. There are circumstances,
 ' in which a young man will find it ex-
 ' tremely hard to pronounce this little
 ' monosyllable; and, in order to do it,
 ' when necessary, he will be obliged to
 ' practise a great deal of self-denial;
 ' but it is a mortification sometimes ab-
 ' solutely necessary. We have a kind
 ' of proverb which advises us "to
 ' think all men rogues, till we find
 ' them honest."

Lucius sat all this while with his eyes
 fixed on my father in the utmost atten-
 tion; but being now unable to contain
 himself any longer, he cried out—'I
 dare say, Sir, the first person who made
 use of this proverb, was a dishonest
 man himself. What a life of suspi-
 cion and distrust! Can he be a friend
 to mankind? Can he have any com-
 placency in his fellow-creatures, who
 looks upon them as a nest of vipers;
 as villains, who only wait for an op-
 portunity to rob or impose upon him?'

'No,' cried my father, interrupting
 him in his turn, 'I did not mention
 this proverb by way of approbation;
 as you would soon have found, had
 you suffered me to proceed; for though
 it is a sure way to prevent being im-
 posed upon, yet it is unjust, and con-
 sequently criminal. It is a much more
 christian disposition, at least, to believe
 every man honest, till we have reason
 to think him a villain: but, never-
 theless, if we know the world, we
 shall see the necessity of using every
 proper precaution to secure ourselves.
 Your benevolence, I allow, ought to
 shew itself in real acts of kindness, but
 it should be in such acts as reason and
 prudence will warrant; a beneficence
 generous and diffusive, and, at the
 same time, consistent with prudence
 and the rules of just economy. Let
 me persuade you to be cautious of sign-
 ing your name. Learn boldly to re-
 fuse what would be improper for you
 to grant; and, having once refused,
 let no importunity prevail upon you to
 act contrary to your judgment. Ne-
 ver let your steward's accounts pass
 unexamined, nor suffer him to distress
 a tenant without seeing the poor man
 yourself.'

Here my father paused; when Lucius,
 thanking him for his advice, and the other
 coach, with Mellifont and Amelia, driv-
 ing

ing to the side of ours, the conversation turned on indifferent subjects. It is now time to conclude this long letter; but I must first do myself the honour to assure your ladyship, that nothing but the pleasure of your company can add to the felicity of your most affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXVII.

DEAR MADAM,

IN my last, if I am not mistaken, I told you, that my aunt proposed our taking an airing before dinner; to avoid the impertinence of some country gentlemen, whom, it seems, she had reason to expect; as they had early in the morning sent her word, that they would do themselves the honour of paying her a visit, to congratulate Amelia and me on our happiness. Their persons, though not their characters, were unknown to me; and though Amelia and her mother had seen them before, yet, as they had no acquaintance in the family, we all looked upon this as an unwelcome intrusion; which, on account of their birth and fortune, we were obliged to overlook; and they, doubtless, imagined us very much honoured by a visit which we would very gladly have dispensed with. For my part, the very idea of being obliged to bear with their impertinence gave a damp to my satisfaction; and, upon my return, I could not help wishing very heartily that my aunt might be mistaken; a wish that I the more readily indulged, as I did not then know her reason for expecting them. But this was both vain and fruitless; for at some distance we could observe a number of spruce servants, in very rich liveries; and, upon our entering the court, our ears were saluted, or rather stunned, with a confused noise, which issued from the window of a room adjoining to the hall. One was singing, with a loud, harsh, and disagreeable voice; while two or three others, all talking at the same time, were engaged in a warm dispute, each seeming desirous to gain a victory rather by the strength of his lungs than of his arguments, and to struggle to outvie the rest in noise. What a jargon was here! Had our ears been entertained with the dismal thrum of the bladder and string, or had we been welcomed

home by a concert of catcalls, I could not have formed an idea of a more disgusting entertainment, than I now expected to receive from the company of those country squires.

My father frowned, and Lucius seemed heartily vexed, but neither of them spoke a word; however, the coach no sooner drove up to the door, than the revel-rout ceased; and the coach-door being opened, Lucius leaped out, and, presenting his hand, helped me to alight, in spite of half a dozen young rakes, who rudely eadeavoured to push before him, and all of whom seemed desirous of doing me this honour. I was next obliged to suffer a disagreeable salute from each; which the last, being already half drunk, rendered, if possible, more distasteful, by belching in my face: but it was a ceremony I was forced to submit to, and good manners made me disguise my reluctance; while my father, being entirely unknown, stood by, with Lucius and my aunt, with the appearance of unconcerned spectators.

This being performed, with as ill a grace as possible, and a wretched compliment bestowed upon me from each, they all ran, with the same familiar air, to the other coach; and Mellifont, having set his foot on the ground, to my no small surprise, was surrounded by two or three of the most forward; one of which, shaking him by the hand, cried—“Damn ‘ye, ye strong-back’d dog, I wish you ‘joy!’ Nor were the compliments of the others much more polite; they wondered where the devil he had been, but could never dream that he had been poaching. Amelia having, after my example, gone through the nauseous ceremonial, we all went in together; but, as we were passing through the hall, I observed one of the most disagreeable wretches I ever beheld; a tall, lean, raw, lank, ugly fellow, with a long face and hollow eyes, dressed in a green frock and laced waistcoat; who, swinging his arms, ran to Mellifont, and giving him a lusty blow on the shoulder, and at the same time seizing fast hold of a button, cried—“Is that grave son of a bitch he?” nodding at Lucius; and then added he—“Zoons! I have a good mind to make ‘him a cuckold—damn me if I have ‘not!’ Though he spoke pretty low, Lucius overheard him; and, letting go my hand, stepped up to him, and immediately seizing hold of his nose, which

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was none of the shortest, led him to me, and insisted upon his asking my pardon, which he did without hesitation; whilst I, trembling with fear, readily gave him absolution; when, bestowing a hearty curse upon Lucius, and writhing his face into several ugly contortions, I suppose to bring his nose into due form, he turned, with a silly grin, to his companions, and, with a sheepish air of affected pleasantry, endeavoured to laugh it off as a joke; though he said it was a cursed queer joke, and he hardly knew whether it was in jest or earnest.

You can hardly conceive, Madam, the terror I was in; for I immediately dreaded, that the resentment of all his companions would fall upon Lucius, whom I, therefore, apprehended to be in danger: but I was in a moment relieved from my fears; for, to my no small surprize and satisfaction, they all set up a loud laugh, and, clapping their hands, capered about the hall with an air of triumphant satisfaction; and my father, who had at first put his hand to his sword, drew it back with a smile.

Nothing now was heard but applauses on Lucius, who was regarded as a hero; and the repetition of I—I—I—, from two or three, running about, and mimicking the look, gesture, and snuffle of their companion, while Lucius led him by the nose; a kind of wit, which, as it was perfectly agreeable to their talents, seemed to give them the highest delight.

As soon as they were conducted to another room, we stepped into the parlour, which they had left upon our return home, the floor of which was pretty well strewn with broken glasses; when my father observed to Lucius, that if these were his friend's companions, he could not help forming a very bad opinion both of his taste and morals. Whether Lucius would have vindicated Mellifont or not, I cannot tell; for my father had no sooner made this remark, than he himself entered the room, and advancing to Amelia, who had staid with us—'I have left,' said he, 'this stupid rabble of baronets and squires to themselves; a parcel of familiar puppies! who, because I had some time ago the misfortune to blunder into their company, must pretend to rank me in the number of their acquaintance, and, as such, to pay me this visit.'—'Pray, who are they? what are they?' cried my father, with a peevish hastiness that

strongly expressed his dislike. 'They are, Sir,' said he, 'gentlemen of different dispositions, united together only by a common taste for a favourite diversion. Some of them are fond of the cockpit, others are fox-hunters, but all of them keep running horses; and positively, by the rusticity of their behaviour, one would imagine that they had their education in the stable; and indeed, for aught I know, the groom may be the better gentleman. But, as they have most of them very considerable estates, they imagine that they have a licence to trouble whom they please with their impertinence. The ladies, I expect, will have a terrible entertainment at dinner.'—'I am afraid so,' said Amelia, 'and I heartily wish them gone.'—'If we could but shut our ears as easily as our eyes,' cried I, 'I should esteem it now an happiness.'—'Gentlemen, squires, baronets!' said my father, with a sneer; 'fools; blockheads, ignorant, stupid rascals! they know no higher satisfaction than a horse-laugh.'—'Well, well,' returned Mellifont, very gravely, 'but you must not form an idea of our country gentlemen from these; many of whom would be ashamed of being seen in their company, as I assure you I am. There are amongst us men of sense, agreeable companions, and here and there is scattered a man of humanity.'

This conversation was interrupted by our being informed that dinner was ready; on which we went to the dining-room, and, after making an apology for our absence, took our seats at the table.

Horses were the subject we found them upon when we entered the room, and this topick lasted all the time we were at dinner; nay, so strictly did they adhere to it, that their very jests had a smack of the groom, mingled with an indecency the most shocking and distasteful, and too coarse and indelicate even to deserve the name of a double entendre. Amelia and I were toasted under the name of pretty fillies; which no sooner went round, than one drank health to the riders; and this produced a loud laugh of applause, and, in the course of going round, picked up an additional piece of obscenity from every one of these gentlemen, who, emulous of exceeding in this way, constantly produced a fresh laugh, and a stare in our faces.

faces. Amelia and I were in a situation worthy of pity; we blushed, hung down our heads, and (I speak for myself) I was ready to sink with shame. At last, somebody asked Lucius if I was a good pacer. 'Aye, damme! and needs neither whip nor spur,' cried another. All eyes were again fixed on me; and thus the supposed wit was bandied about, collecting fresh mire from every kick. But whenever the man who had given us the affront in the hall began to speak, for he seemed very desirous of adding his quota, Mellifont stopped him short, by snuffing out, 'I—I—I—,' and giving him a hint, that if he had not yet enough, he would lead him another turn. This kept him silent, and afforded us some small relief.

At last something was said, which I had the happiness not to understand; it was addressed to Mellifont, and was something about jumping—no, leaping was the word: but it seems it was very gross; for Lucius, who had several times before began to speak, but was interrupted and borne down by some stupid ribaldry, seemed now resolved to break through all opposition; and therefore, raising his voice louder than common—'Pray, gentlemen,' said he, 'what have these ladies done, that they should be shocked with such poor, wretched obscenity? Is there any merit in putting a lady to the blush? It is cowardly, mean, and scandalous; below the dignity of a gentleman. A gentleman! did I say?—below the dignity of a man!'—'Cowardly!' cried one of the most forward, interrupting him, with a haughty air, and frowning steady look, 'pray who do you call coward? Faith, I won't be led by the nose.'—'Yes, cowardly!' cried Lucius, raising his voice still higher, and speaking with equal sternness; 'aye, cowardly!'—'Cowardly!' echoed my father and Mellifont, at the same time. 'I repeat it again,' continued Lucius, with a firmness and resolution that charmed me; 'it is cowardly, an insult on decency; it is affronting the ladies in the tenderest part; and, however authorized by brutal custom on these occasions, it is an insult on nature—the most barbarous insult, thus to discolor the cheek of conscious innocence.'—'Pox!' cried a youth of about eighteen, who seemed, by his ignorance and

his dialect, never to have been twenty miles from home, 'he weant let us be witty; I'll be curst if ever I was so witty in aw my life. The women should no' be sheamfac'd; it is time that was o'er, or the devil's in't. I ha' said more behauf before my own mother at wom, and shu loff'd as thof shu would ha' be——' 'Witty!' cried my father, interrupting him, with a sneer; 'let us see that you have common sense, young man, before you affect to be witty.'—'Common sense!' said Mellifont, with a satirical laugh; 'Common Sense is a lady that very few here are acquainted with, I can tell you that: why, Common Sense is no common woman; and therefore she is as much shunned by these, as a common woman by a man who has any sense at all. And as to my Lady Decency, they don't even know her when they see her; if they did, it might be possible to make them blush.' Mellifont had laid down his knife and fork at the beginning of this speech; and now, leaning back in his chair, and holding up his hands in a supplicating posture, he immediately added, with an arch look, that had a mixture of the serious and comical—

"Hail Decency! celestial maid!"

"Descend from heav'n to beauty's aid,"

"And blast the wretch that's not afraid

"To affront thee."

The humorous manner of his introducing the two first lines from Swift, and his adding the last, without the least hesitation, gave us an agreeable surprise, and made my father and Lucius smile, for the first time since they had been at table. And indeed, their obstinately refusing to drink all the toasts proposed by these rakes, and their vindicating our refusal, had kept them in a constant squabble, whilst Mellifont was sure to regulate himself according to their motions. These gentlemen, intimidated, affronted, or struck with some sense of shame, continued pretty silent for some time; and then resuming their favourite subject of race-horses, to our no small satisfaction, drank to each other, and let us alone.

At last this hateful meal was over, and I protest I would not go through the same mortifications for any considerations. My mind was then in a very
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tender situation, easily shocked, and extremely susceptible of pain. How barbarous, how cruel, how inhuman, then was it, thus to blast the joy of innocence! rudely to tear the veil that hides those rites that modest decency would conceal, but which neither God, nor reason, condemn! with brutal insolence to trample on the snowy robes of bashful chastity! How impudent to stare us into confusion, and to add a triumph to the affront by a ridiculous laugh! I am shocked at the recollection of this scene; and therefore must conclude with assuring you, that I am your ladyship's most sincere and affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXVIII.

AFTER so long a silence, Madam, you may justly wonder that I have the assurance to confess that I am still alive; but however ashamed I am of my negligence, I have neither the complaisance nor the resolution to leave the world out of a punctilio of good-breeding, especially as I am in perfect health, and so happy in my present situation, that I can, without the least pain, think of deferring, for many years, a visit to the heavenly regions. You tell me I have lost, in the wife, the affection I owe to the friend; and I will not deny your having, in appearance, some reason for this heavy charge; but as I hate apologies, I will not take the trouble to justify myself, though I would have you think my negligence owing to the different turn of my affairs, to my insolence, stupidity, or whatever else you please, rather than to a want of that affection which I shall ever feel for you.

Three months ago, I gave you an account of our marriage; and I have now to add, that, in order to put an end to those ceremonious visits, which at last began to grow extremely fatiguing, we found ourselves under a necessity of leaving my aunt's sooner than we had intended: Mr. Manly, therefore, bought an estate at some miles distance, with a mansion-house, which, by his direction, was repaired and furnished with all possible diligence. We removed hither about two months after I sent you my last, and, at the same time, Mellifont carried his bride to his

own estate. We frequently see each other, and enjoy all that satisfaction from these visits which the most intimate friendship can afford us. Not the least reserve subsists between us; a perfect sympathy in each other's happiness makes us such strangers to ceremony, that we have nothing to do but to consult our own inclinations, to render us agreeable to each other. Our house is a very neat building, yet so plain a one, that it would be trifling too much with your patience to give a description of it. The situation is indeed charming, being surrounded with woods and groves, which on the one side must, in the summer season, appear extremely delightful, as the other does so now, though in the midst of frost and snow. *There* will be the triumph of nature; *here* is the boast of art; *there* that uncultivated wildness, which pleases without method, and without design, charming most where the easy confusion, and agreeable disorder, render art superfluous, and labour vain; *here* all the ornaments that art, in despite of nature, can bestow.

In the front is a tall and stately wood, composed of oaks venerable with age, with no other opening but a large area, and a vista, which carries the eye from the centre of the building to a considerable distance. Here the intermingled branches must, I fancy, in the summer season, cast a shade, varied with all the degrees of light, from the bright sun-beam, glittering through the boughs, to the dusky gloom of sober twilight.

Behind the main building is a garden of considerable extent; which, even in this season of the year, has its beauties. To take no notice of the parterre, which lies next the house, the hedges, which are on each side the principal walks, are formed of ever-greens, resembling walls, adorned, at proper distances, with pilasters, which, with eternal verdure, branch into all the decorations of architecture. In the midst of each walk, along an opening, on either hand, the eye is carried through a number of triumphal arches, composed of the same leafy materials, and which, leading to the extremity of the garden, are bounded by several fine alcoves, the paintings of which, though injured by time, have a very agreeable effect. In some of the squares composed by these walks, are fish-ponds, in others groves of fruit-trees, and in others knots of flowers
of

of various forms, which, in the season for these fragrant ornaments, must, I fancy, be vastly delightful. In the middle of the garden, where all the principal avenues meet, upon a pretty high ascent, is a summer-house; the windows of which, as well as the walls, are so covered with ever-greens, that the faint obstructed light spreads a gloom perfectly soothing; while the clusters of shining berries half covered with snow, hanging against the glass, with frosted leaves of intermingled silver and green, seem to give the lye to the season, and to join in one view Christmas and Autumn. At the entrance is a guard of giants, with their massy clubs resting on the ground; harmless monsters! that I can view without the least trembling. 'Tis true, they themselves appear in some disorder, for want of pruning; their heads and bodies are covered with a number of luxuriant branches, and even their fingers are grown near half a yard beyond the just proportion that ought to be allowed them.

Autumn was far spent before Lucius and I, attended by my father, went to take a view of our new habitation. I fancied myself in fairy land; and could not help expressing my surprize, that while the winds, on one side the house, scattered in wavy curls the russet-leaves, which, with every blast, fell from the half-naked groves; on the other, they were clothed with lively verdure, and still appeared smiling in their gayest liveries.

'Tis true, there is something disagreeably formal in the studied regularity that reigns here: statues, obelisks, and triumphal arches, are but awkwardly mimicked in box and yew; but still they find work for some labouring hands, who might otherwise want the means of subsistence; and, for this reason, Lucius may possibly continue them in their present situation, with only a few alterations, in order to render the whole more easy, free, and natural. Besides, as the house and gardens are in the midst of a wood, this spot, even in the summer season, will agreeably set off the wildness of the prospect, and, by a pleasing contrast, heighten the variegated scene.

In this peaceful retirement, Madam, we enjoy a tranquillity unknown to courts. Our passions, which, before this union, were high-raised, and too tenderly ardent

to be unmixed with pain; now gently soothed, sink into a delightful repose. The diffidence, the flutter of heart, is gone, and exchanged for the calmer sweets of an endearing friendship. We have now the satisfaction of passing our time in the proper employment of reasonable and immortal beings. No wayward humours interrupt our peace; no little jars fret the tender cord of sweet content and mutual complacency, which, when once broken, is so difficult to join again.

Religion, which, to others, is a source of the most gloomy reflections, is to us an inexhaustible spring of rational and sublime delight. We daily address the supreme and sovereign Good, as our father, our friend, and benefactor; we admire the wisdom, the wonderful skill that shines in all his works: we adore his goodness, and pour forth our gratitude in humble praise. What transport can equal that of gratitude! what delight be comparable to that of a thankful heart! If you call this enthusiasm, it is, at least, an enthusiasm the most noble and refined, justified by the coolest dictates of reason, and necessary to render human happiness complete.

Our minds have hitherto been calm and unruffled. My sister Marilla is my constant companion: I have prevailed with her to stay with us a fortnight; and we spend a part of the day together, either in reading in the summer-house, which Lucius has furnished with the most valuable ornament, a fine collection of books; or in paying or receiving visits, among a few select friends. Hither we sometimes all three repair; and, with intermingled chat and reading, find subjects ever new and entertaining. Great part of my time is taken up with the management of my family, or in working at my needle. Your ladyship sees what a domestick animal I am grown: but while these amusements give an alacrity to my spirits, by diversifying my satisfactions, I shall have the greatest reason to be pleased with them; for though you smile at the meanness of my taste, I find a real happiness arising, even from these low employments, since they not only preserve peace and order in the family, but give a greater relish to the superior pleasures of which I am sensible, when, unbending my mind, I enjoy the conversation of my friends. As to the vapours, Madam, it is so

long since I have felt those modish disorders, that I scarcely know what they mean; so that not the rosy milk-maid, happy in her humble obscurity, that sings or laughs from morn till evening, can be less troubled with the spleen than I.

I have nothing more to add, but that I am yours, &c.

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXIX.

DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH it is impossible I should receive an answer to my last, you having yet scarcely read it, I write now to let you see that I can commit, upon occasion, an act of supererogation. Add this to my former neglect, and try if it won't, in some measure, make the balance even.

Two or three days after our arrival here, my father returned to London. We were now pretty well settled; for those workmen who had been employed in making the necessary repairs, being discharged, every thing was soon reduced into proper order. Mellifont, Amelia, and my sister Marilla, were present, when my father, in the most tender manner, took his leave. We had all resolved to accompany him some miles on the road, but he positively refused to suffer it, alledging that this would only prolong the uneasiness of parting: we were, therefore, obliged to submit; and being mounted on horseback, (for he had before made us a present of his coach) attended by a servant, was soon out of sight. We returned into the hall, and stood for some time, in a thoughtful posture, without speaking a word; when at last Mellifont, assuming an air of cheerfulness, cried out—"Come, come, what do we stand here for? We must divert this pensive humour; suppose we take a turn in the garden?" This motion was immediately complied with, and the uneasy gloom insensibly dispersed; but the weather being pretty sharp, I ordered a fire to be made in the summer-house, to which we retired. Having taken our places, Marilla said with a smile—"I was one day last week to visit Miss Powers, an elderly maiden lady of great prudence, and the daughter of a deceased clergyman; who, though she has but a small fortune, finds

the means, by the help of the greatest economy, to make a pretty genteel appearance. When I knocked at the door, I was told she was not at home; but as she was expected every moment, I was desired to walk in; and, indeed, I had hardly sat down when she entered the room, with her hands covered with dirt, and one of them stained with blood. I arose, and, with a good deal of concern, enquired what was the matter—"O, nothing," cried she: "I have fallen down, but I have only hurt my hand; it was a mercy I did not daub my new gown." It was impossible for me to forbear smiling at this answer; I desired she would explain herself, and asked her if she thought the Almighty could be supposed to concern himself in an affair of such trifling moment as a few yards of silk, which, though it had been soiled, would still answer all the ends of dress, though not of vanity. She was very much displeased at this answer; and, therefore, all the while she was cleaning herself, and preparing a plaister for her hand, warmly justified the propriety of the expression; alledging that nothing was too mean to fall under the inspection of the supreme Governor of the world. I thought this argument so conclusive, that I was quite at a loss for a reply; and, therefore, introduced a different subject. But I have since recollected an observation of yours, brother, that, among superficial thinkers, it is no uncommon thing to find an injudicious application of the most important truths, when it is made to support their own weak prejudices, to cases in themselves of no importance.

This short story gave rise to a very long conversation. Lucius began with observing, that particular circumstances will make some persons look upon an inconsiderable pain as a trifle, when compared to the loss of what can only serve to flatter the imagination, and the more so, in proportion to the difficulty of procuring these gratifications. "This," said he, "is a common case; but if it be proper to call the preserving a gown unsullied a mercy, or a favour from Heaven, it must be equally so to make this a petition in prayer: yet, if a lady was to be overheard, at her devotions, crying—"Lord preserve my best gown and petticoat from stains

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“and dirt!” the absurdity would be so glaring, that nobody could avoid taking notice of it. One who has a competency, prays for wealth; another, that he may obtain the honour for which he is soliciting; but what is this, abstracted from the moral use of wealth and honour, which few seem to regard, more than praying for a new head-dress or a new gown? Or what are the petitions for the continuance of these, when none but themselves receive the least benefit from them, but praying that the gown, or petticoat, may remain unfulled? A gentleman who has a coach and pair, is ambitious of being drawn by six horses; and, only with this view, solicits for a place, to enable him to accomplish it: now, where is the difference between praying that he may obtain this place, and praying that, instead of a coach and two, he may ride in a coach and six? If a pretty milkmaid should pray for money to buy a new top-knot, would her petition be more ridiculous?

Men are carried away by false appearances, and enamoured with the dazzling shew of some glittering trifle. Providence, they flatter themselves, is employed on their behalf, and the God of nature engaged in procuring the empty, the pernicious bauble. The miser unjustly seizes the last remains of an unfortunate, helpless family, exposes them to want and beggary, and adds the fruits of extortion to his useless store, and cries, with his hollow eyes lifted up to heaven, It is a mercy that he was not too late to save his money! Might not the less guilty debauchee go to the stew, and, with equal propriety, say, It is a mercy that he found his favourite girl at home! Yet what horrid profanation! Can any thing be more superstitious, more shocking and absurd? Unconscious of the final result of things, while Heaven is affronted, they are delighted with the gratification of their favourite vices: but how vain, how delusive, the joy! They mistook for happiness, what was really the cause of the sharpest anguish. The miser, as he carries home his gold, is robbed of all his dear recovered treasure; while the debauchee is expiring with a loathsome disease.

“But do you infer from this, brother,”

said Marilla, “that the Deity is entirely unconcerned about the temporal happiness or misery of individuals? For my part, I think this would be going a little too far.”

Lucius paused a moment, and then said, he had hitherto only endeavoured to expose a false notion of Providence, and that kind of superstition, which makes some men, who deem themselves the peculiar favourites of Heaven, resolve events the most trivial, in comparison with the important concerns of human life, into signal blessings and deliverances. A man of this turn knows that gratitude is a duty, and affects to discharge it very minutely; but never reflecting that the superintending care of Providence is exercised over a whole universe, and, with regard to him, only as a part of that whole; his gratitude, which should be always warm and lively, lies dormant, till some circumstance of his own life, no matter how trifling in itself, provided it powerfully strikes his passions, calls it forth to exercise: he can then prove to you how much above his neighbours he is the object of the Divine favour, and how justly his pious acknowledgments render him so.

They then entered more largely into the consideration of a particular Providence; and, as I have recited their observations hitherto, I think I may as well endeavour to give you the substance of the rest. But, dear Madam, you must excuse me if I fail in the performance: it is a task somewhat above my abilities; and, as I shall be forced to abridge a very long dispute, which met with various interruptions, I am sensible it will want all those natural graces in the repetition which gave life and spirit to the conversation.

Mellifont observed, as the world is a great machine, governed by fixed mechanical laws, it is most reasonable to suppose, that man, as a free agent, is entirely left to the free exercise of his natural abilities, and to all the consequences resulting from it; for it is absurd to imagine, that a Being of infinite sagacity should form a world in so bungling a manner, as to make any interposition at all necessary afterwards; much more to suppose it so imperfect, as to stand in need of continual botching and mending. “A man makes a watch,

' watch, by which I would illustrate my
' idea of this grand piece of mechanism;
' but this watch, though it may be per-
' fect in it's kind, yet, as it wants fre-
' quent winding up, and especially as it
' calls for repeated repairs, is a piece of
' workmanship unworthy the skill of an
' almighty Artificer.'

' Excuse me, Mellifont,' replied Lu-
cius; ' you are going on with a suppo-
' sition that will never be granted. I
' readily allow, that the stupendous
' fabrick of this earth, and all the un-
' numbered worlds that fill the vast im-
' mensity of space, move, in their several
' orbits, by the most perfect laws; but,
' does it follow from hence, that the
' whole is only a grand piece of clock-
' work, which, being set a going, will
' move several thousand years before it
' be run down? Gravitation, by which
' all bodies have a tendency to each
' other, according to the strictest en-
' quiry, is one of those qualities which
' do not essentially reside in matter, con-
' sequently, it can be no part of the
' machine. Your watch, then, has not
' only lost it's spring, but the pivots are
' dropped from every wheel, and the
' whole become a heap of confusion;
' nay, the very wheels themselves have
' lost their form, and the metal of which
' they are composed is crumbled into
' infinite minute particles.

' This gravitation, which evades the
' search of the most curious enquiries,
' can be resolved into nothing but the
' immediate hand of Omnipotence, which
' locks together the infinitely small par-
' ticles of solids, impels and gives mo-
' tion to the heavenly bodies, adds fresh
' fuel to the sun, and whirls round it
' this ponderous mass of earth and sea,
' in a constant rotation of days and sea-
' sons. Hence arises a general Provi-
' dence, which, presiding over all na-
' ture, gives fertility to the soil, raises
' the sap in vegetables, blossoms in the
' trees, and glows in every flower.

' It is very apparent, that thunder
' and lightning, sunshine and rain, and,
' in some measure, the various degrees
' of heat and cold, are not under the
' same regulations as the diurnal
' and annual changes; since some of
' them are so far from being periodical,
' that they have no relation to time and
' place, but are, with respect to us, ab-
' solutely uncertain and precarious; yet,
' on some of these depend the sub-

' sistence, the support, and very being,
' of the whole animal and vegetable
' world.

' Here is another instance, and in this
' there is room for the exertion both
' of a general and particular Providence;
' an instance, which you, Sir, would
' have found some difficulty in reducing
' to a scheme wholly mechanical. The
' earth is parched up with drought, the
' air is more and more rarified, and,
' consequently, by it's tenuity, more
' unfit to raise to a due height, and sup-
' port those mists from the sea and
' rivers, which are necessary to form
' the refreshing rain. Who is it that
' directs the clouds to thicken in the
' heavens, to fall in cool, refreshing
' showers, and, before it be too late, at
' once to rejoice the earth and bless
' mankind? If this dry season lasted
' one month, why might it not have
' lasted two, six, or twelve, till man
' and beast had been quite destroyed,
' and whole regions laid in ruins?
' Again, the rain falls, the moist and
' spongy air still collects, and still pours
' in a settled stream; and there is greater
' reason to believe that it will rain to-
' morrow than there was yesterday that
' it will rain to-day; and while it con-
' tinues the probability is still on the side
' of it's longer continuance. Did not the
' Parent of mankind interpose, the all-
' enlivening sun might for ever hide his
' cheering beams, and we might be
' cursed with a cloudy sky, while joy
' would be for ever banished, and seed-
' time and harvest be no more.

' In these instances, we daily see the
' most convincing proofs of the friendly
' care of the universal Parent. Hence,
' he blesses one nation, and depresses
' another; and, even in the same coun-
' try, humbles and exalts whomsoever
' he pleases.

' But, to be more particular; is there
' the least shadow of a probability, if we
' may judge from analogy, that this
' stupendous Being, who with such in-
' finite care and skill preserves the ma-
' terial, the vegetable, the animal world,
' should be entirely regardless of the
' intellectual and moral? That the
' Being, who knows the most secret
' springs that move the human heart,
' should not, upon occasion, influence
' these, and, by affecting an individual,
' give happiness to millions? That he
' should inspire with wisdom, or perplex
' and

and confound, so as best to answer the wise designs of his government? That the God of truth should, by diffusing a little light over a dark, benighted mind, promote the cause of truth, and spread the influence of pure religion, a free enquiry, and liberty of conscience, through a whole nation? That the most benevolent Being in the universe should grant the petitions of the man whose heart is prepared by humble prayer to receive the blessings he asks? That the Friend of mankind, the most virtuous, the most amiable Being, should look with complacency on virtue in distress, and relieve the pious suppliant who confides in his goodness? That he should curb the pride of the successful villain, and shield the honest heart from the sly attacks of the fraudulent knave? Is there any thing irrational in this? any thing beneath a God? If it be more noble to change the swelling anguish of distress into the glad some raptures of gratitude and joy, than to form the most curious machine, this must be an employment more worthy of a God than to create a world of lifeless matter, or all the glories of what Milton calls the "golden pavement of heaven, or the bright sea of jasper, or of liquid pearl."

Mellifont looked very grave, and for some time continued silent, as if lost in thought; when seeming to recollect himself—"Well, well," replied he, "you may, for aught I know, be in the right. We giddy-headed fellows don't think so deeply. But, after all, yours is an opinion that, now I think of it, we may reasonably wish to be true. However, let us change the subject."

Thus, Madam, with indefatigable labour, have I blundered through this long conversation, and am now so heartily tired, that I am absolutely unable to add any thing more, than that I am most affectionately yours,

FELICIA MANLY.

P. S. When I had finished the above letter, instead of sending it away immediately, as I at first intended, I resolved to shew it Lucius, and this delay retarded my sending it till the end of the week. I have just now re-

ceived an answer to my last; but with what surprize do I find myself so unmercifully treated about one poor paragraph*, which, though you had disliked, your good-nature might have made you overlook! I am really half angry; but you throw away so much wit and humour on my pious rant, as you are pleased to call it, that I am almost afraid and ashamed to confess it: however, I can't help being persuaded, that all this mirth is at the expence of your more sober judgment. But the bottom of my paper puts me in mind that it is time to conclude this long postscript; I therefore refer you to my next for an answer, and, for the present, throw down my pen.

LETTER XXX.

DEAR MADAM,

I SHALL take no notice of the ridiculous light in which you place my manner of life. Your representing me as a recluse, and the companion of the young Druid Lucius, and your invocation to the rural gods and goddesses, on their receiving me to these sequestered, ever-verdant shades, have such a mixture of pleasantry and humour, that with all that solemn sanctity which you lay to my charge, I could not help laughing very heartily: but the case is a little different with regard to what you call the puritanical scheme, and the pious whim; for your ridicule here has a levity, in my opinion, bordering a little upon the prophane. Yet, for all this, it seems you must know what method Lucius took to make me comply with it, and insist upon my sending you the particulars. Can any thing be more extraordinary? However, to let you see how much I am yours, Lobey, and proceed.

A few days after our marriage, Lucius desired me to take a turn with him in the garden. I readily complied; and as I perceived an unusual thoughtfulness in his look, I endeavoured to divert him; when, taking hold of my hand—"My dear Felicia," said he, "I am going to make myself appear to you in a very ridiculous light, and to make a proposal that I fear will expose me to

* Letter XXVIII. page 99. We daily address the Supreme, &c. from which passage Charlotte takes occasion to ridicule prayer,

'be laughed at: but perhaps I injure you; I am persuaded I do. Custom makes us ashamed of our duty: we are ashamed of uttering solemn, important truths, though of the greatest moment; for however freely we talk of the social duties, it is with reluctance we mention those to our Maker.'

'How you raise my curiosity!' cried I. 'Out with it, dear Sir, I beseech you, and don't keep me any longer in suspense.'

'You know, my dear,' continued he, with a tender warmth, 'the blessings I am loaded with. I imagine myself raised from almost nothing; I see my father relieved from those distresses which weighed me down; and, while surrounded with plenty, I enjoy one blessing more, dearer than all the affluence of life. Ah, what is life compared to this! Can I, O can I, smother the gratitude of my heart? Can I confine it within the narrow limits of my own breast? Will not you join with me in adoring the kind Sovereign of the world? Shall we not, with united hearts, at once express the full sentiments of our souls, and keep alive the pious ardour that longs for utterance? Shall we not, by petitioning the continuance of his mercy, implant and cherish those dispositions that will make us more worthy of that mercy?'

'As I am equally interested in the blessings you mention,' said I, 'I ought, perhaps, to reproach myself with a want of that sensibility, which you express with a warmth that, I must own, is very affecting. I have heard prayer ridiculed; and you must excuse me if I say, I am afraid I should look upon it as a few minutes passed in a very irksome manner. There is something so solemn and gloomy in the very idea of these set devotions, that they almost frighten me.'

'Let us banish,' said he, with a smile, 'the gloom of superstition, and Religion will then appear all over amiable; her beauties will brighten upon the review, and the more we are acquainted with her, the more we shall be charmed with her graces. Prayer is one of the first duties dictated by natural Religion, the elder sister of Christianity; a duty naturally arising from our obligations to, and dependence on, the universal Parent, the Friend of man-

kind, the Patron of virtue, the most amiable, the most kind and benevolent Being in the universe: a duty enjoined by Christianity, and enforced by the example of our great Law-giver himself. Did we, my dear, address a stern and rigorous tyrant, a gloomy terror and awful dread might justly hang upon our spirits; but how great is the difference, when inspired by gratitude, and prompted by the glow of filial love, we address a Being whose all-commanding goodness demands our utmost esteem, our highest complacency! Surely it must then be accompanied with a most sublime and rational delight!

'I know it is objected that, as we can inform the Deity of nothing but what he knew before, and can ask him for nothing but what his original goodness will prompt him to grant without our petitioning for it, prayer must be, in it's own nature, absurd and impertinent.'

'It is true, that this duty makes no change in God; it is true he will grant, without our petitions, what it is fit for infinite Beneficence to give, and us to receive: but it is as true, that the exercise of this duty, by changing the dispositions of the mind, changes that fitness; as the humble suppliant is an object more worthy of the Divine blessing and protection, than the man whom no sense of duty can fix, and no obligations bind. Does it not exalt, refine, and elevate the mind, by leading it to the contemplation of the most sublime and important truths? Does it not call away the heart from the pursuit of folly and madness? Does it not raise the soul to the God of virtue, and, consequently, to virtue itself? Does it not check the growth of pride, self-sufficiency, and malice? Does it not keep awake the tender sentiments of humanity, our gratitude to our Maker, our affection to our friends?'

'Enough, my dear Lucius,' here I cried; 'enough. I own myself conquered; my reluctance is vanished.'

You must know, Madam, it was at the close of the day when Lucius desired me to walk out; and, as the sun was then setting, it began to grow dark: we therefore went into the thickest part of a tuft of trees, where we might safely remain unobserved; when, like the first happy





happy pair, we presented our evening orisons, which, for the future, were commonly performed in my chamber. When we came to remove, it was resolved that this duty should be performed twice a day in the family; and, on this account, we chose the most sober young people we could find for our servants. I dare say, we have more order and decency observed in our family, than in any other within ten miles round us. We seldom omit going to church twice every Sunday; not so much to gain any new acquisition of knowledge, as to keep alive a sense of our duty, and, at the same time, to set an example to the rest of the parish; the lower part of which are greatly influenced by what they see us great folks, as they call us, do: for here, with respect to example, one or two thousand pounds a year has a thousand times more efficacy than all the advantages of superior sense and reason.

You have now two letters since I received your last; and if they do not give your ladyship the vapours, I may be in hopes that you will, in time, be good for something else, besides giving felicity to one man, pleasure to a few friends, and happiness to a number of dependants: you may in that case, I say, become ridiculous enough to exercise the wit, and exhaust the spirits, of your gay companions; but you will never have the honour, like me, to find a friend who will, with such sparkling wit and fine address, endeavour to laugh you out of your religion. I have the honour to be your ladyship's very humble servant,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXI.

IN order to introduce this letter, Madam, it is necessary for me to inform you, that my father, before he took his leave of us, had several times hinted to Lucius, that it would be no disadvantageous employment for him to learn the characters and manners of his tenants, and even of the poor, residing on his estate; that he ought particularly to enquire into their circumstances; and that, as his interest was closely connected with theirs, to endeavour to serve them to the utmost of his power. As soon as my father was gone, Lucius resolved

to pay them a visit, and yesterday began to put his design in execution, imagining that, as he was yet quite unknown, he might be the better able to inform himself to his satisfaction. Last night, after his return, I learned his success; and as he happened upon some adventures in this expedition worth relating, I shall give them to you while they are yet fresh in my memory.

He set out soon after it was light, dressed but meanly, and with only one servant out of livery, and rode to a farmhouse, at about two miles distance; where, entering the yard, he dismounted, knocked at the door, and asked for the master, who came running from the stable, and, in a surly manner, demanded what he wanted. Lucius desired to be informed if he knew any body that could supply him with a load of hay. This question at once civilized the farmer, who before seemed resolved to behave in a very brutal manner; but the bargain being soon made, Lucius went in to pay, and the farmer to receive his money; when a mug of ale being brought, the latter, after a good hearty draught, became in an instant one of the most sociable fellows in the universe; he shook Lucius twenty times by the hand, with a freedom as great as if it had been authorized by a long acquaintance. Having entertained him, for half an hour together, with the price of corn and cattle at the market, Lucius, with the air of a stranger, enquired about his farm, and asked him who was his landlord; when he began in the following manner—

‘Yo mun know, mester, that I ha’ got a new lonlord; I doant know who he is, but they say he has married one of your Lonon ladies, who, they say, has a mort o’ money: besides, they say, he is one o’ those good-natured foo’s, look’e, that wull do ony mon a service that axes him, thof he never sead, him aw his born days: and besides, I believe the grey mare is the better horse; for he is meety fond of his lady, never stirs from whome, and never gets drunk. Now my damie says, that such a lonlord as this’n is fit to be imposed upon; but I doant mind what sha says, for I am mester in my own house, and weant be contradicted by the best woman that wears a beead. No, no; let Tummus Clod aloan for that: before I’d be like my lonlord, I’d hong myself.’

‘ You

'You are in the right, my friend,' replied Lucius, laughing; 'always take care to be master in your own house.'—'Ey, ey,' rejoined the courageous farmer; 'I am a wise mon, I can tell ye that; and a scollard too, for I can read and write; and I was one whoale month in my accidency, and larn'd something about parts of speech, and neouns and prunams, and I hardly know what myself.'—'I believe it,' cried Lucius. 'You are a great man; and may be as great a man as your landlord yet, for aught I know.'

'Odzookers, gi' me your hond again!' cried the farmer, delighted with the compliment; 'yo'r an honest felley, I'll be sworn: but here's to ye heartily. But, as I was saying, my lonlord is a soft sort of a mon; and so, as I owe hauf a year's rent to my old lonlord, I have a mind my new lonlord should pay it; but you munno say one thing of it.'—'O no,' replied Lucius, 'I won't say any thing of it, without you tell your new landlord of it yourself.'—'No, no; who would be foo' then?' rejoined the farmer. 'I only sell a few trees, that were stonding on the lond time out o' mind; and which I should no' do by reet, a cause they were mentioned in my lease.'—'Well, but as to the honesty of the thing, friend Thomas,' cried Lucius, 'how do you reconcile that?'—'Honesty!' replied Clod; 'why, as to that, mester, you know we mun live. It is true, I am pretty well to pass; but a mon should take care o' his family; and ye know, what the eye does no' see, the heart does no' rue, as the proverb goes; and a little out of a mickle is no' miis'd.'—'But pray,' said Lucius, 'how much may the trees you have cut down be worth?'—'Why look'e, my lad,' replied the farmer, 'a hundred pound; and so I shall ha' ten pound in my pocket, for my trouble; that yo know is but fair.'—'For your trouble!' cried Lucius; 'that is very extraordinary.'—'Why yo know,' rejoined the booby, 'a mon should be paid for his labour; and besides, such a hen-peck'd—'

Here his wife entered, who, it seems, had overheard some part of this fine discourse; and giving him a look of contempt—'You are a wise felley,' cried she, 'to tell aw ye'r affairs to a stream-ger! Ah! ye aud foo', if I had no more wit than yo, ye might have been

hanged before now.'—'Nay, daam,' cried he, 'doent scold; ye know that ye advis'd me to it. I had no' fel'd the trees, if ye had no' made me.'—'I made ye!' cried she, colouring, and coming a step or two nearer; 'I made ye! I made ye tell of it too, did I?' Answer me that; do, dunce, do. This mon, for ouwt yo know, may tell Squire Monly.'—'No, no,' cried he, trembling, 'he looks like an honest felley.'—'An honest felley, ye rascal! an honest felley is a very proper person to tell that yo are a rogue. O that ever I should be yoaked to a foo!'—'I am no more a foo' than other folks,' cried he, just loud enough to be heard. 'Than other folks, ye blockhead!' she rejoined, as loud as she could bawl; 'I suppose yo mean me. I a fool, ye dog!—There, take that;' and here she seized the mug, and throwing it at her husband, it flew over his head, whilst the liquor was pretty equally divided between all the three. She now burst into tears, sobbing out—'Caw me a foo', ye barbers mon yo; I doant deserve to be treated a this'n, I doant, ye wicked munster yo.'

Lucius here slipped out, and calling his servant, the *honest courageous* farmer followed him to the door, scratching his head; but looking behind him, and seeing his wife seated in a chair at the other end of the room, he whispered—'It is well you were here, measter, or I believe I should ha' murdered her.' Lucius made no answer; but mounting, and riding off, told him he would send a waggon for his hay; and immediately went to take a view of the devastation made among his trees, when he found eighteen or twenty of the largest oaks lying ready to be carried away.

Agreeable as this discovery might appear, Lucius was under some perplexity, on thinking how he ought to proceed with the farmer. He now visited several of his other tenants, from whom he learned nothing worth mentioning. They were, in general, honest, plain men, blunt, and extremely ignorant: and afterwards paid a visit to the minister of the parish, with whom he dined. On his return home, he observed, at a small distance from the road, a farm-house belonging to the same manor; hither he went, and entering without ceremony, thought he observed a wildness in the looks of the people, that seemed to express a good deal of fear and apprehension.

son. At first, he fancied he might be known, but he was soon of a different opinion; for the woman rising from her seat, with a trembling voice asked what he wanted; and, in the same instant, the husband slipped out at the back-door. Lucius replied, that he was very sorry if his being there gave them any uneasiness; and, so far from doing them any hurt, he would serve them to the utmost of his power. The woman eyed him very attentively, and stood for some time silent, which only served to increase his curiosity; at last she thanked him, and asked again what he wanted. 'Want!' said he; 'why, you behave so oddly, that I want to know what is the matter. You look like a good sort of a woman,' added he, 'and I should be glad to drink a dish of tea with you, which I had rather have here than at a publick-house.'—'Lack-a-day,' said she, 'we never drink tea; but you shall be welcome, if you'll send for it, and cook it yourself; for I do not well know how to go about it.' On this Lucius gave her a guinea; the tea and sugar were bought, and a teapot and two earthen cups and saucers borrowed; but when the change was brought to Lucius, he gave it amongst the children. This entirely won the good woman's heart; she now lost all her fears; and, at his request, readily ran to call her husband; who was no sooner seated, than Lucius informed him, that he was a gentleman who had a pretty estate in that part of the country, but, as he was upon a frolick, he did not chuse to tell his name. He then urged the farmer to let him know the cause of that disorder which, on his entering the house, was visible in all their countenances.

'You great folks,' cried the honest man, 'have no notion of the misfortunes and cares that sometimes fall upon us, who are forced to struggle hard to get an honest living. One bad season puts us back so far, that several good ones can hardly repair our losses. This, master, is my case. About four years ago, I had a rot among my sheep, which killed above half, and those the best of my flock; and as my corn proved bad, I could not pay my rent; this put me behind hand, which my landlord excused, and promised not to distress me; but as he

is dead, and the land sold to one Squire Monley, his executors, as they conno, seize my stock, threaten to throw me into jail, for the half year that is still due. This makes me o' most distressed. There is near a quarter due to my new landlord, and if they should let me alone, I know not when I shall be able to pay him. But, werriday*, I have no hopes that they will forbear any longer. Though my fears keep me awake, I every morning dread the least; and when I rise, I tremble to think that, perhaps, the next meet I may lie in a prison; and when it grows dark, I am glad that once more I shall sleep in mine own bed, and be secure till morning. Sunday is, indeed, a happy day; I then enjoy my security, but as the meet comes on, my fears return. O master, it breaks my heart to think what will become of my poor family, which you see is none of the smallest! I am a feard to go about my work. I tremble at the feet of a stranger. I hardly know what to do. In short, I am o' most mad.'

Lucius was so extremely affected at the moving expressive tone, and the artless simplicity with which the poor man told his distress, that he could scarcely refrain from tears; and it was with much difficulty that he concealed his concern.

'Well, but suppose you should tell your case to your new landlord,' said Lucius; 'if you can give him proof that you are an honest man, he may, perhaps, take the debt upon himself, and, rather than lose a good tenant, give you time for payment. I know him, he is a good-natured man, and I dare say he will not be hard upon you.'

'No, no,' replied the unhappy man; 'I could sooner die than do it. I could never speak freely to such a rich man. I am not used to such company. Besides, it would signify nothing. It is a miserable life to be all as in fear.'

'Now I have thought of something,' cried Lucius, with a forced smile, 'that I am sure will do. Have you not some timber growing on your land?'—'Yes,' returned the farmer; 'but what then?'—'Why, I'll tell you,' replied Lucius; 'suppose you cut it down and sell it, and pay your debt with the

* A word of nearly the same meaning as Well-a-day.

‘ money; Mr. Manly will never miss it.’

The farmer here held up his hands, and his wife examined him more narrowly, and, if possible, with greater terror than before. At last, the honest man starting up, as if affronted, shocked and insulted, cried—‘ Get out o’ my house, ye villain; do ye tak me for a rogue?’ And here he seized a large oak sapling, that stood in the chimney corner. Lucius got up, and was beginning to speak in his own defence; but he had hardly opened his lips, when he was interrupted, ‘ Yo a gentleman! yo the devil!’—‘ Ay,’ cried the wife, ‘ it is the devil sure enough, for all he has hid his cloven foot. Here, gi’ me the money,’ cried she to the children; ‘ there, tak yo’r curst money,’ added she, throwing it at him; every gesture expressing the fright and agitation of her mind. Lucius endeavoured in vain to speak; ‘ Get out,’ was still repeated; and the husband holding up his sapling, advancing, cried—‘ I’ll see if he be the devil or no.’ On this, poor Lucius retreating backwards, tumbled over the threshold into the yard, and the door was immediately clapped to, and locked. He received, however, not the least damage by the fall, except what his coat and wig sustained; for a heap of friendly dung, that had been kindly raised by some cows and horses, received the fallen, though formidable Lucius. But, though his bed was soft, it was not a fit place to rest in; he arose therefore immediately, when he overheard the poor honest man cry out to himself—‘ God forbid that I should be such a villain, as this felley would ha’ me be. I’d go to a jail first. If I am miserable, I am honest at least, and after aw, that is some comfort.’ Mean while the servant who was walking in the yard, seeing Lucius in this disorder, ran to his assistance; but, finding him already upon his legs without speaking a word, in a moment broke the door, which it seems was a very slight one, to pieces. The woman was unhappily fainted away in a chair, and the good man was assisting her; him he seized by the collar, and in an instant threw up his heels, and was preparing to revenge the abuse done to his master, when Lucius put aside the blow, and with diff-

culty dragged him away, for he quitted his hold with much reluctance. But they had hardly mounted their horses, when the farmer’s son and a servant man and maid who had heard the bustle, the two first from the stable, and the last from the dairy, came running to the field of battle. A speedy retreat was absolutely necessary, for this was now an improper time to hold a parley; they, therefore, having gained the gate of the yard, set spurs to their horses, and were soon out of sight.

Thus, Madam, I have given you the history of one day’s ramble; and, if nothing prevents, I shall very speedily send you the sequel of the story of these two farmers, with such opposite characters; mean time, I am very much your ladyship’s, &c.

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXII.

YOU think it strange, Madam, that though Lucius should relate the discourse of the farmers in the dialect of the country, I should have memory sufficient to retain the pronunciation; and from this remark you infer, that I have had more regard to your diversion than to the veracity of an historian. But here you are greatly mistaken; you ought to consider the difficulty of living in the country, without catching the peculiarities of the language. This I have sufficiently obtained, so that I have nothing more to do than to remember the words; the pronunciation I have already. I have a good deal of the country accent in my ordinary conversation, and whenever I am disposed to it, can talk in the true dialect almost as fluently as the sprightly milkmaid, or the wife of a ploughman.

The day after the adventure of the two farmers, I was no sooner stirring than I heard an unusual bustle below stairs, and several persons talking very loud, with some sounds, which, though I could not perfectly understand, seemed to express great amazement. My woman could give me no satisfaction; I therefore desired her to ring the bell, when a servant entered the room, with as much terror in her looks as if she had just seen a ghost. ‘ What is the matter, Mary?’

‘ Mary?’ said I; ‘ you look frighted.’—
 ‘ O law, Madam,’ cried she, ‘ wud you
 think it! Did you ever hear the like?
 The devil has appeared to my † neam
 and my naunt Saunders, and told them,
 that as how—as how——’ ‘ As
 how what?’ returned I. ‘ Why as
 how,’ continued she, ‘ he wud ha him
 cut down aw the ‘squire’s trees, and
 he wud gi’ him a power o’ money for
 them; and he gived them some money,
 which was, I suppose, for arnest; but
 they wud no’ tak’ it. Indeed, Ma-
 dam, it is true; for, I verily believe,
 we shall ha’ the w’oll story in print.’—
 ‘ Pho, pho, is that all?’ cried I; ‘ it is
 an idle tale, take my word for it.
 Pray, what sort of a devil was it?’—
 ‘ O! he was a meety civil devil at first,’
 said she, ‘ and as like a handsome man
 as ever you seed; but, at last, he va-
 nished out o’ the door, as one may say,
 in a flash o’ fire; and then they ‡ made
 the door after him, when an ugly devil
 came pop through the key-hole, and
 wud fean ha’ murdered the good mon;
 but the handsome devil poo’d him
 away, and wud no’ let him; but, as
 they went out, they had like to ha
 takken the side o’ the house wi’ em;
 for the doore was broken aw to pieces,
 and to be sure there was a great smell
 of brimstone. I mar’l whether the
 handsome devil had no’ great saucer
 een, when my neam was going to
 strike him; for Goody Simple says, sha
 thinks sha heard say as much. But the
 ugly devil had two great platter een,
 like balls of fire, and turned into the
 terriblest creature that ever was seen.’—
 ‘ There is nothing in it, Mary,’ said I;
 ‘ I am sure of it.’—‘ Nay, Madam,’
 said she, ‘ to be sure you know best, and
 I am a’most o’ your mind; for though
 they say, Old Nick can dizen himself
 like an angel of leet, yet yo know as
 how he can never go without his clo-
 ven foot; and Betty Saunders looked
 wi’ aw the een in her head, but cou’d
 na see it. But, methinks, it is a pitty
 such a fine story shu’d no’ be true; for,

‘ of aw things, I like to hear about ghosts,
 and haunted housin, and such like.
 Our Robin, Madam, loffed at Goody
 Simple, and said shu was a lying awd
 witch, and talked as thof’ he wou’d
 kick her out o’ the house; but we wud
 no let him; and then he flew into a
 passion, and said his een were no more
 like platters, nor balls of fire, than
 hern, and if shu said it agen, he wud
 kick her a—; breech, I mean, saving
 your presence.’ Here she dropped a
 curtsy. ‘ But,’ continued she, ‘ we
 could no tell what to mak o’ that; for
 the squire came in, and said—“ Hush,
 not a word, Robin;” and then staid
 to hear the woman himself, while she
 eat the meat I giv’d her quietly, and
 made me fetch her a mug of ale.’

‘ Well,’ said I, ‘ I have enough of
 this idle stuff; tell John he must go
 and bring Mrs. Saunders to me.’
 Here Lucius appeared, and added—
 ‘ And her husband too; and bid him be
 sure to tell him he must not be frighted;
 for I have some good news for him.’
 And then coming to me, as Mary left
 the room—‘ Well, my dear,’ said he,
 ‘ you find I am mounted on the wings
 of fame; Mary, I suppose, has given
 you a full account.’—‘ O yes,’ said I,
 ‘ they are resolved to make a devil of
 you; they have already collected some
 diabolical circumstances; and I don’t
 doubt but, before night, they will
 have dressed up you, and your man,
 with all the terrors that the most wild
 imagination can invent.’—‘ No mat-
 ter,’ said Lucius, ‘ though they paint
 me in the character of a devil, the por-
 trait they give of me is so unlike the
 original, that I shall never be known
 by it. If poor Robin is already such
 a monster, what must he be by to-
 morrow morning, when the story will
 be spread through the whole county,
 and every one has added some dread-
 ful circumstance to the fiction? Horns
 and hoofs w hibe the least of his de-
 formities. Had the old woman staid
 till then, before she brought us the

* You, in this county, carries with it something of the idea of a compliment, as ex-
 pressing more respect than Yo; and for this reason, husbands and wives in particular, who,
 on common occasions, politely as they think, make use of the word You, whenever
 they quarrel, constantly contract it into Yo.

† My neam, and my naunt; other counties say, gaffer and gammer.

‡ Shut the door.

‘ news,

‘news, poor Robin would have gaped, and stared, and wondered, with the rest. However, I am glad the honest farmer is sent for. The poor man’s distresses have touched me very nearly, and something must be done for him. I intended to send to him this afternoon, but I am better pleased that I shall see him this morning, since he will now have a few hours taken from his anxiety, and added to his happiness.’—‘A valuable consideration,’ said I, ‘that ought not to be forgot, whenever we intend to confer an obligation.’

In about two hours time, the honest farmer made his appearance on horseback, with his wife behind him, freshly shaved, and both dressed out in their Sunday’s garb. All the servants, in an instant, ran out to see them, except my woman, and Robin, who was purposely sent out of the way, on a message to Nottingham; for they had been informed of their coming by John, who returned near an hour before. They dismounted at the door, when a volley of questions were in a moment discharged from every mouth, to which it was impossible for either of them to answer. This Lucius and I observed from the dining-room window. I immediately went down, and found that the men had now surrounded the farmer, and the maids his wife, whom they all viewed with looks of astonishment, all desirous of being answered first, as thinking their own question of the most consequence. I stood in the hall near a minute, to observe this ridiculous scene; but, whatever answer they had received, I observed a general air of dissatisfaction, almost as great as that which appeared immediately after; when, in order to draw the good couple from the clamour of this tormenting persecution, I ordered them to be conducted into a back parlour facing the garden; and I could hear distinctly, as they separated, one cry—‘No een of fire!’ Another—‘No cloven foot!’ And, from different voices—‘No horns! No tail! No nothing, I think. It’s a pity! Ah! what a fine story is here come to nought!’

They had been in the parlour about two minutes when I went to them: I found them standing; but taking a chair myself, insisted upon their being seated; which, after some clumsy scrapes from

the one, and as awkward curtseys from the other, they at last complied with; but sat together, close up to the wall, in the most distant corner of the room. As soon as this ceremonial was over, which lasted some time—for these country people certainly think good manners consists in being troublesome.—‘Mrs. Saunders,’ said I, ‘they tell very strange things of you. You have been dealing with the devil it seems; at least he has been paying you a visit.’—‘Who, I deal with the devil?’ cried the good woman, in a fright; ‘Lord help me! I hope I ha’ nothing to do wi’ him.’—‘I hope so too,’ said I; ‘but, pray what foundation is there for this strange story?’ Here she related it, in much the same manner that Lucius had done, only omitting her husband’s account of his misfortunes, and making use of the terms, Handsome devil, and Ugly devil, to make a distinction between them: but she mistook one circumstance; which indeed had, as she understood it, a very diabolical appearance; for she asserted, that the last time Lucius and Robin entered the house, they came in through the key-hole, and broke the door to pieces as they went out. But here the husband interposed, and set her right; when she apologized for her mistake, by saying, that she saw the door locked before she fainted away, and when she came to herself, she found it broke to pieces; and as she was before pretty sure it was the devil, she thought it most natural for him to come in at the key-hole, and to take the side of the house, or the door at least, away with him, when he went out; for this she remembered to have heard, when a child, was his custom. And she concluded with assuring me, that she would not tell a lye about it. ‘I believe so,’ said I, ‘and I am very well pleased with your sincerity; for, as I know the story better than you, you could not have deceived me.’—‘That is very strange,’ cried the honest man, with a look of amazement. ‘Know it better than we? Why, Madam, you was no’ in my house too!’—‘If it be strange,’ said I, ‘it is true; but I heard a very different story this morning.’—‘Why, as to the matter of that, Madam,’ cried the wife, ‘folks tell so many lyes about it, that I am ashamed to hear them; and wud you think it? they are angry at

'at me, a cause I weant sey as they sey,
'and wull ha' it their own wey, whe-
'ther I wull or no.'

'Well, that is not your fault,' said I;
'but you should not have so readily
'imagined it to be an evil spirit. Nor
'should you, Mr. Saunders, have been
'so ready to conclude him a rogue.
'You ought at least to have heard what
'he had to say in his own defence, for
'it was not without reason that he made
'the proposal of your cutting down
'Mr. Manly's trees. You may take
'my word for it that you are both mis-
'taken. I know every particular of the
'story. You, Mr. Saunders, gave a
'very moving account of your misfor-
'tunes to a very worthy gentleman, the
'person you call the handsome devil.
'He heartily pitied you: he resolved to
'serve you; and I assure you, that you
'may now sleep securely, and awake
'without dread; for he hath pleaded
'your cause so effectually to Mr. Manly,
'that he has promised to take the debt
'upon himself, and to wait till you can
'conveniently pay him.' The farmer
lifted up his eyes, and in an extasy, cried
out—'God bless 'in'!' and then seemed
endeavouring to say more, but stopped,
as if the struggle in his breast between
joy and gratitude choaked up his voice:
however, some tears, at least as expressive
as words, stood ready to fall from his
eyes, which, with once or twice turning
aside his head, he wiped away with the
back of his hand. Mean while, the
good woman cried out, in a shrill key—
'A handsome devil! A handsome angel!
'God reward him, and the 'squire to
'boot.' But what made the elevation
of her voice more remarkable, was the
low trembling diffidence with which she
spoke before. There was now a silence
of at least half a minute, which ended in
the old woman's bursting out a crying,
which she did most heartily, repeating
several times, with her hand on her hus-
band's knee, and her eyes fixed very af-
fectionately on his—'Well, I was never
'so glad in aw my life—no, never in aw
'my life.' At last the farmer cried,
lifting up his eyes, and looking at me
—'An angel! aye, an angel indeed! or,
'after aw the usage I ha' gi'n him—
'Well, God's blessing leet upon you
'aw!'—'I thank you, Mr. Saunders,'
said I, 'if you reckon me among the
'number. But here comes either your
'landlord or your friend.'

Lucius, who had been walking in the

garden, in order to give me time to pre-
pare them to see him, was now coming
up an avenue facing the door; but, at
the mention of the word Landlord, I ob-
served that the poor man's diffidence
and reserve, which began to wear off,
immediately returned, and his features
in a moment became contracted: per-
haps his joy was damped by the very
idea of a person whom he had before
considered only as an object of fear.
But, however this be, not the least al-
teration appeared in the wife, except a
little female ambition, or rather that re-
gard for decency and decorum of cha-
racter, which is as visible in the spruce
dairy-maid as in the dutchess. She
therefore took her eyes from her hus-
band, and her hand from his knee, laid
smooth her clean though coarse white
apron, pulled down lower a pair of old-
fashioned ruffles, and stroked her hair
under her cap: and this was done with
the natural motion, and composed look,
which sometimes makes all the distinction
between these actions, when performed
by a country housewife, and the more
affected airs of some lady of distinction.

Lucius now opened the door; when I
cried—'O Sir, is it you? I have pre-
'pared them to see you; and you may
'safely come in, without being taken
'for a devil.' And then addressing my-
self to the farmer—'Here is your friend,'
said I; 'do you know him, now he has
'changed his dress?' Lucius returned
my compliment; and then running to
the farmer, who was standing biting his
hat by the side of his wife—'My ho-
'nest friend,' said he, 'I am glad to
'see you. Well, are you disposed to
'knock me down now?' The farmer
scraped, the wife curtsied, and both be-
gged his pardon. 'Well,' replied he,
'you find I don't resent your treatment
'of me. But, Madam, won't you fa-
'vour me with a glass of wine, to drink
'to my new friends?' added he, turning
to me. 'To be sure,' said I, and
rung the bell; on which a servant com-
ing, the wine was called for, and being
brought, the man was ordered to re-
tire. Lucius filled, and taking the
farmer by the hand, wished him happier
days; and having each of them drank
their glass, he desired the honest man to
take a turn or two with him in the gar-
den; and at the same time begged the
favour of me to go with them, alledging,
that I might leave my woman to keep
Mrs. Saunders company.

As

As this story of the appearance of the devil had spread with wonderful swiftness through the country, Lucius was unwilling it should be known that he had any hand in it: and, indeed, he had not the least ambition of being distinguished among the country gentlemen by the name of the Handsome Devil; a title which would be inevitably given him, was he known to be the principal actor. And besides, as he had more tenants to visit, he would not have it mentioned that he had ever visited any of them, since the rest might expect to see him in the same manner, and being put upon their guard, might frustrate his design of penetrating into their characters, manners, and circumstances. These motives were the rise of this preconcerted plot, of making him appear rather as the friend of Lucius, than as Lucius himself, before the farmer's wife; whom, though a very good sort of a woman, he was unwilling to trust with a secret of such consequence.

We were no sooner in the garden, than the farmer, addressing himself to Lucius, said—'You mun excuse me; I conno' thank you as I wud. If you could read my thowts, there wud be no need of words to tell you my joy, my surprize, my gratitude. But ye mun forgi' me, if I say I love you: for it is no' my fault; I conno' help it. And this lady mun forgive me too. Our ladies are so proud, they weant speak to a poor mon; but shu is so good, so free, and the messenger of such good news, that I conno' help loving her; and my heart will say, in spight o' me, "God blefs her, and my kind freend!" and e'en let it say so and it wull; for if I did no' gi' my heart this vent, I verily believe it wud burst. I never preyd so heartily in aw my born days, and never said prayers wi' hauf the pleasure I say these two or three words. You have made a new mon o' me: I verily believe I could o'most pray for you as well as a parson; aye, as well as thof I read in a book. Thank you, thank you.'—'God blefs you too,' we both replied, at the same time, with a satisfaction, though less tumultuous, as delightful, at least, as his. And indeed, the poor man appeared raised above himself; the transports of his joy, by getting a vent in words, seemed to become more exquisite. He talked with a greater volubi-

lity of speech; to which a half-pint glass of wine, which he had lately drank, might perhaps contribute. His eyes sparkled with affectionate gratitude, and a kind of delightful rapture seemed hovering over every lineament of his countenance.

The good man was now silent; but, after a short pause, resumed—'Is this the mon I turped out o' my house? Is this he that I was yeasterday going to strike? Weil, no matter; had I used him kindly, I shud no' ha' know'd him so well. I wud ha' done ony honest thing for him, for saving me from a jeyl; I wud ha' look'd upon him as my best freend. It wud ha' been a kind action, and I shud ha' remembered it as long as I lived; but me thinks I shud no' ha' loved him so weel as I do now. But, good Sir, are you fure Squire Monly weant be hard upon me?'—'Never fear it,' replied I; 'I will answer for your landlord.' He thanked me; and then looking at Lucius, cried—'My generous friend, mun not I know to whom I am obliged? Mun not I know your neame?'—'O yes,' replied Lucius, 'this you shall soon know; but I must desire you to keep it a secret, and not to let even your wife or son know that my name is Manly.'—'What, my lonlord himself!' cried he, in a rapture; 'then indeed I ha' nothing to fear. My lonlord that I have abused! my lonlord that is so generous!—I can only wonder. What shall I do for you? How mun I mak you amends?'—'Leave that to me,' Lucius replied. 'Here are forty guineas, that I have in my pocket for you, to pay the executors of your late landlord, which you must do this evening, before you go; you may give me a note for the money, and I will contrive a way for you to pay it again.' I then took my turn; and telling him, that as he had been so distressed, he and his family might want some of the common necessities of life; to supply which, I desired his acceptance of five guineas; which he received, bowing low, with a submissive kind of joy and rapture. Lucius now gave him an account of his going to Thomas Clod's, and of his telling him that he had cut down his trees: but, as he was yet undetermined how to proceed with him, desired him to keep a strict watch, that none of them were removed, and no more cut down, without giving him im-

mediate

mediate notice; adding, that he would pay him handsomely for his trouble: and dinner being now ready, the farmer went in, and rejoined his wife. They both dined at our table; and, after Lucius had again privately enjoined the good man to secrecy, they, with many warm, though homely testimonies of gratitude, took their leave. I am, Madam, your ladyship's most affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXIII.

DEAR MADAM,

LUCIUS has been again among his tenants, and has now finished his ramble. The last time he was out upon this expedition, he observed a man with white locks, and a venerable aspect; but want and care, rather than extreme old age, seemed to have silvered his hair: his eyes were hollow, his person tall and meagre, and he had a placid serenity in his countenance that bespoke a kind of joyful composure of mind. His coat was of broad-cloth; and, though worn threadbare, and well patched, was perfectly clean. He was coming out of a house, with a bag in his hand, which he seemed desirous to conceal. The oddness of his appearance, in a country village, joined to an air that seemed to command respect, engaged the attention of Lucius; who became curious enough to form a resolution to know, if possible, who he was, and what that could be which he endeavoured to conceal; and therefore dismounting, he led his horse by the bridle, and followed at some distance, till he saw him enter a small thatched house, and shut the door after him. Thither Lucius directed his steps, and, on his arrival, was going to knock at the door; when turning his head to the window, he observed the same person standing before a table, and with his eyes lifted up to heaven with a look of thankfulness, utter a seemingly devout ejaculation, and then sit down by the side of an elderly woman. He now gave a rap at the door with the butt-end of his whip; on which, as it happened not to be latched, it immediately flew open; when, to his great astonishment, he saw an earthen plate of grains smoking on the table, which they endeavoured to conceal, by throwing the end of a ragged damask napkin, which

served for a table-cloth, over it, and immediately rose up.

Lucius's surprize was hardly to be expressed. 'Is this,' said he, 'what occasioned such marks of devotion, such thankfulness and gratitude? Was it this that you were so desirous to conceal?'—'Yes,' replied the old man: 'but why should you rudely press to discover what I was unwilling to have known? Why should you thus mortify the little pride that is left me?'—'I beg pardon,' said Lucius, 'for an intrusion which I cannot justify; but satisfy my curiosity, and let me know by what terrible disaster you are drove to this dreadful extremity. Yet stay; let me first prevail upon you to provide some provisions more fit for human creatures. You must have a great mind, to be able to support such want, and to rejoice over a meal that would make others of less piety repine at Providence. Though in the midst of affluence, I could almost envy your resignation, that bespeaks you more than human. Accept of this, Sir,' continued Lucius, throwing down five guineas upon the table, 'and provide something more proper for your refreshment.' The old man, first lifting up his eyes to heaven, took up the money with an air of extreme thankfulness, accompanied with very polite expressions of gratitude; and immediately gave one of the pieces to his wife, who presently returned with some beef-steaks and a loaf: however, in this interval they took their seats, and the old man began in the following manner—

'I don't wonder at your being surprized at a meal which, when I was of your age, would have given me equal astonishment; but want will make us relish the coarsest fare, and hunger sweeten the most disagreeable morsel. I was born a gentleman, but spent a good fortune in the service of an ungrateful family, and, as I am now persuaded, in a very bad cause. I am a native of Scotland, and was educated in the national religion; but, carried away by the heat of youth, and a set of ridiculous principles which I imbibed from some of my companions, I sold my estate, and went over into Ireland, and entered as a volunteer in King James's army, where I fought in defence of a religion the most oppo-

' site to my own. But I must do myself the justice to say, that ambition was not my motive. I was present at the battle of the Boyne, and in almost every battle afterwards, in which my master distinguished himself by a superior cowardice. But I will not tire you with a repetition of what every body knows already. At the battle of Aghrim, when our army was entirely routed, it was with difficulty I made my escape; and, as I lost all my baggage, my fortune, which before was almost exhausted, was by this event entirely ruined. I returned into Scotland with a wife and two young children: and pleased with the hopes of seeing my relations, particularly a tender father, and a brother with whom I had been brought up from my infancy, I arrived at Kirkaldy, the place of my birth; where I found that my father died at London some time before. Here I soon experienced, that my wants, instead of entitling me to relief, only served as a pretence for treating me with contempt. Nay, my nearest relations hardly knew me. It was with difficulty that I got access even to my brother, though of the same political principles with myself. I was suffered to wait in the hall like a common servant. I was choaked with indignation, yet I smothered my resentment. In short, after only lying a night or two in his house, with a barbarity unknown to savages, I, with my wife and children, after many affronts, were *civilly* turned out of doors, and obliged to shift for ourselves.—' Strange effect of immoderate self-love!' said Lucius; 'in it's extremes the most odious of all the passions, and the most fruitful of mischief! How strong must it be, when it can thus cancel the sacred bond of nature, and dissolve the holy tie of brotherhood!'—'Aye, aye,' replied the old man; 'whoever is in want, let him apply to a stranger, and he will have no gall poured over the friendly morsel. If he is in distress, let him fly to his friend, and he will not be humbled with the contumely of a proud relation. I was now a stranger in the very town where I was born, and where I had spent the greatest part of my life. Stung to the quick with this indignity, and enraged beyond all possibility of bearing the place, my native country became

' hateful to me. I resolved to set out for England; and had it not been for the humanity of some persons, with whom I had a very slender acquaintance, and, particularly, a gentleman, a friend of my father's, who, with a cheerful benevolence, that doubled the obligation, supplied me with what was necessary to bear the expence of my journey, I might, perhaps, have been driven to the extremity of begging my bread.

' You see, Sir,' continued he, 'that, amidst the greatest misfortunes, the contempt of my relations still sticks nearest my heart; not that it now gives me any great uneasiness, for my affection for them is converted into a calm and settled contempt. Yet, were our circumstances changed, I would still serve them to the utmost of my power. I would not, indeed, give them my esteem; this I reserve for the deserving.—But I tire you with my reflections.

' We arrived in London; and, by the assistance of a friend, I entered into trade; but by ridiculously lending my note to an acquaintance, the most pernicious and destructive custom that ever was introduced amongst tradesmen, I was reduced to very great extremities. However, these were at last surmounted, and, with a mixture of success and misfortune, I continued in the same station for upwards of twenty years: and, believe, me, Sir, abject as my condition now seems, it appears to me even preferable to the anxiety I then frequently felt, from the fear of duns, the dread of a jail, and the uneasy apprehension lest some honest man should lose by my misfortunes: the last, in particular, was a constant shock to my humanity; and where the person was in low circumstances, and had a family that, by my means, would be sufferers, the thought stung me to the soul, and gave me the most pungent anguish. Add to this, the many mortifications I received from the purse-proud tradesman, whose common maxim is, that *Every man may be rich if he will*; and that frequent breach of veracity, with respect to times of payment, which the necessity of my affairs sometimes rendered unavoidable. This last, a love of justice, and a fixed and steady regard for truth, rendered most irksome and painful: in

one word, it was a wound festering in my conscience.

At last, I sold my stock, paid my debts, and retired to this place, with my wife and a boy of ten years old. I cheerfully maintained my family by my labour while my strength lasted, and enjoyed a serenity that I cannot remember to have tasted in the midst of my early affluence. With a conscience undisturbed, and a mind free from care, I applied myself to reflection, and softened the fatigue of labour with large draughts of knowledge, with an improvement in piety, and the study of virtue and religion. I had before learned the ways of men; I now took a review of my own. I had long since imbibed the philosophy of the schools: I now reduced it to practice; and laying by my Seneca and Epictetus, applied myself to the study of the Scriptures, and to open my heart for the reception of those divine truths which lead the mind to God. Wrapped up in a happy solitude, I consider every thing here below only as it tends to my eternal welfare; and, while I grasp at an immortality of joy, find but little inconvenience from the coarseness and indelicacy of my poor repast. I have no other assistance but what I receive from my dear boy, who is now above twenty. With a filial affection he forces me to receive a good part of the fruits of his labour; but, alas! that is much too little to find him in cloaths, and us in the means of subsistence; and I am loth to have my wants known, lest this should again subject me to contempt; and more particularly, as it might prejudice his hopes; for he is excessively fond of a farmer's daughter, who, though her father is a weak, and no very honest man, is very worthy of his affection. We have lived for some time on those sallads which the fields afford, but they are not now to be had. Young nettle-tops, boiled, were next our daily food: of these being tired, I some days ago tasted some fresh grains; I was hungry, and found them palatable, for what will not hunger make so? And, as I frequently amuse myself with fishing, by which I sometimes gain a delicious repast, I am not suspected of wanting them for my own nourishment. This circumstance affords me no small plea-

sure, for all temporal happiness consists more in the opinion of others than on what we eat and drink.

I have just mentioned my son to you; he is a lad of probity and integrity; and, if I may judge from the present you have just made me, you are in circumstances that will allow you to be of service to him; let me recommend him to your protection.

Pity, Lucius says, was the least of all the passions which seized him, upon hearing this story; his compassion gave way to surprize and admiration; and the graceful manner with which this truly venerable man expressed himself, still heightened that esteem, which was justly raised by such exalted piety, such contentment and resignation. Lucius, therefore, very frankly replied, that he judged right as to his circumstance, but that he had not less inclination than ability to serve them all. He desired his friendship. He took him by the hand, and, with the strongest expressions of esteem, assured him, that he would do him all the service in his power. The steaks were now ready; and the good man asked him, if he would not do him the honour to partake of a meal which he himself had enabled them to provide. As Lucius had not dined, he very readily accepted the invitation, on condition that he and his son should dine with him the next day, when they would consider what could be done for the young man. This was immediately agreed to; and, while they were at table, Lucius desired him to explain several passages in his story, which he did not perfectly understand, and particularly, what he meant by lending of notes. This being done, the discourse again turned upon the hardships he suffered with respect to his way of living; hardships, which Lucius said were unknown to the rest of mankind, and which he could not think of without expressing the most lively marks of astonishment. The good man smiled.

At first, said he, this gave me some uneasy thoughts, but I soon learnt to conquer them, and to be thankful for the coarsest morsel. I represented to myself the excruciating tortures which rack numbers of mankind; and asked myself, what comparison could be made between exquisite pain and a mouthful of unpalatable provisions? I acknowledged the difference, and blessed the Being that made our case pre-

ferable to theirs. The hardships endured in sieges are much greater than ours; for, at the siege of Derry, a plate of grains would have been delicious fare. They would have looked upon this as a blessing, and shall I repine at what would have filled them with joy? Besides, could I have made my case known, which my aversion to the contempt which always attends poverty, and my regard for my son, has prevented, we might have lived in a much better manner; for whey, and butter-milk, would not have been refused me. My wife and I are both satisfied, and thoroughly convinced, that true happiness does not consist in such trifles as these: for, wherever there is inward complacency, humanity of heart, and devout thankfulness, there is content, there is the noblest felicity.

'Tis very strange,' said Lucius; 'but whoever calls for assistance, is sure to meet with contempt and scorn from every ignorant blockhead; yet, there is a chain which runs through all nature, by which every species of beings have a dependence upon each other: but, let us view only man, that proud being, that, in spite of all the clearest dictates of reason, and all the laws and impulses of nature, would fain persuade himself that he stands alone, and free from obligations; wraps himself up in self-sufficiency, and refuses to confer on another what he imagines he does not want himself. The infant no sooner breathes, than, with a pining cry, he proclaims his wants, which the fond mother is, at first, but little able to relieve; he is, therefore, committed to strangers, and receives his first obligations from them: he grows up, and daily demands help from his parents; and, as his years increase, his dependance, and obligations, become more general, even for the means of life, the support of his very being, and the cultivation of his mind; till, at last, he becomes a debtor to thousands. If he is ashamed of this dependance, for the same reason he must be ashamed that he is a man: but if, after this, he refuses his assistance, or contemns him that stands in need of it, he is no longer a man, but a monster.'

'Fine reasons! fine reasons!' cried

the old man, smiling; 'but you will never be able to persuade a miser, that avarice is a greater crime than poverty; or any body else, that to be poor is not to be contemptible.'—'There is no man so stupid,' said Lucius, 'as to believe that poverty is really criminal, or even contemptible: it is, indeed, in their opinion, a thing to be dreaded; not that they think it infectious, but for fear they should be asked for what they cannot give consistently with their notions of self-love, nor refuse without some inward commotions on the side of humanity. And, for this reason, those who, from an immoderate and false self-love, study to keep their humanity under, always take care, for their own sakes, to represent poverty to themselves as something ridiculous, mean, and contemptible. They are sensible of the amiableness of the friendly dispositions; and a fear of being suspected to want either them, or the abilities necessary for the exercise of them, may possibly be the principal reasons why the rich are ashamed of their poor relations; as it may be thought, that they themselves are either not so wealthy as is imagined, and, therefore, that they *cannot*, or that they have nothing really amiable in them, and therefore *will not*, relieve them. A kind of pride the most wicked in itself, and the most pernicious to society.'

'Thus we may derive all the calamity that falls upon the unfortunate, from the same self-interested views; a struggle against the strong impressions of nature, an endeavour to suppress the more generous sentiments of humanity. From my little experience, I have found, that whenever a man fails, let his probity have been ever so conspicuous, it then becomes necessary that his conduct should be arraigned, and more particularly so by his relations, and the self-interested amongst his friends; for where no act of humanity is expected, the man may still remain esteemed. His virtues, such as industry, care, and application, are not what they look for; these, therefore, are thrown aside as useless lumber; but, if an act of humanity be found, though he was then in a capacity

to be generous, it is immediately thrown into the heap of follies; nor is there an indiscretion in his whole life that can be thought of, but it is mentioned, to increase the load. No wonder, then, that it becomes enormous. Thus want of success, which no mortal can secure, is charged as guilt, and the unhappy honest man is treated with a hundred times more contempt and obloquy than the successful villain. And self-love, shifting the disgrace farther from itself, the relations of a husband throw the greatest load of blame on his wife, whilst those on her side cast it back on her husband.

‘Will she never have done?’ methinks, Madam, I hear you say. ‘Yes,’ I answer. But you ought to remember, that I have been giving you the history of a hero in patience; and this should put your ladyship in mind, that it does not become you to express much uneasiness at such a trifle as the length of a letter; for I have nothing more to inform you of, but that Lucius, having dined heartily, took his leave, and, with the hopes of seeing the good man and his son the next day, jogged home. And, therefore, I am at liberty to break off, and subscribe myself, your ladyship’s most sincere friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXIV.

WELL, Madam, I have now seen this venerable old man, whose history I gave you in my last; and, I can assure you, he perfectly answers the description Lucius gave me of him. His son is a well-made, agreeable young fellow; and, though he finished his education in a country village, it seems has a good share of learning; but this is not at all surprising, as his father was his tutor. His behaviour has too much of the gentleman, for him ever to make a good clown; and he has too much bashfulness to pass for a gentleman. It was easy to see that he had never been in such company before; for he blushed whenever he was spoke to, and, when he answered, it was with as much diffidence, and precaution in placing his words, as if he had been before a magistrate. In short, if his sentiments are at all answerable to the ingenuity of his

look, he, with his fair Daphne, or Amaryllys, might make a good figure in a pastoral eclogue.

After dinner, under the pretence of taking a walk in the garden, Lucius conducted us to a neat house, just on the outside of the back door, leading into the fields. He asked the good man how he liked it; and he, as he expected, admiring the situation, Lucius, in very polite terms, desired his acceptance of it for life. Our venerable guest received this favour with all imaginable testimonies of gratitude; while his son, by his looks, seemed in a rapture of joy; and, indeed, as it has only four rooms, that is, two on a floor, it is a mansion proper enough for an anchorite. Besides, Lucius has promised to furnish it; and I am to make him a present of as many books as he shall have occasion for; a catalogue of some of which I have engaged our hermit himself to write out for me.

While they were taking a view of this small building, a servant came to inform us, that the farmer, who had been here some days before, desired to speak with his master. Lucius immediately gave orders that he should be admitted. The honest man came, and stepping aside with him, informed him, that the trees, which he had been ordered to watch, were to be removed the next day. At this news, Lucius sent for Clod, with orders that he should come directly, and bring his counter lease. Lucius had before related the whole affair to Mellifont, and he again to a gentleman of the law, who has an estate in this part of the country: he strenuously asserted, that he ought to undergo the penalty mentioned in his contract; that is, to pay one hundred pounds, to forfeit his lease, and to make good the damage; and that lenity, in this case, would be an ill precedent with respect to the other tenants: whilst Lucius was of opinion, that as the whole affair had been told to him in confidence, his honour would not permit him to proceed to extremities; and the good old man, to whom he now told the story, without mentioning the farmer’s name, was of the same opinion; but could not help smiling at the silly fellow’s talking of being paid for his trouble, in cutting down trees that he had no right to meddle with. The conversation then turned on the young man, who was next to be provided

provided for; and being found to be very well qualified for the post, he was chosen house-steward, and an apartment assigned him in our house, consisting of a bed-chamber, a parlour, and a little room for an office.

The joy of the tender parent was now compleat, and tears of gratitude rolled down his venerable cheeks. He lifted up his swimming eyes to heaven, and then casting them down upon us, blessed us with an ardour that spoke the fulness of a heart lost in devout thankfulness. 'O, little did I think,' cried he, 'of living to see such a day as this! My God, I thank thee! and, O bless my benefactors, as they have been the means of blessing me!' Here he took hold of Lucius's hand, and pressed it between his; then raising it up to his lips—'I thank you for my dear boy,' cried he; 'I joyfully commit him to your care. May it be always his study to deserve your goodness!'

Here the young man, finding his good father make a pause, stepped forwards, and then bowing—'Excuse me, Sir,' said he with a tone that seemed to arise from a mixture of timorousness, and a joy too big for utterance, 'if I want words to express my thankfulness for a favour greater, vastly greater, than all my hopes. But—a—my gratitude—my care and my fidelity—shall best thank you: but what return—' Here he made a long pause, and seemed quite lost; when the old man, with a little confusion in his look, cried—'You see, Sir, the effects of a want of genteel company; my son has no illiberal education, nor does he want either sense or words to express himself, when among people of a lower class, with whom our circumstances have hitherto permitted him only to converse.' Lucius smiled, and clapping the youth on the shoulder with a free and familiar air, said, he would take care to remedy that fault; and this freedom of behaviour seemed to have an immediate effect, for, in an instant, the young man's confusion and disorder seemed to vanish; and being now pretty well assured, prompted by a little female curiosity, I desired him to give us the particulars of his amour with the farmer's daughter. He blushed, and, after a short pause, consented; and with more assurance, and less hesitation, though not

without fear and trembling, gave us the following account.

'When I was about eighteen, as I was riding back from watering my master's horses, they took fright; the horse I rode on ran away with me, and hastily turning short through a gap in the hedge, threw me. I lay senseless for some time. When I came to myself, I hardly knew what had passed; I endeavoured to recollect myself, and looking about to see where I was, immediately cast my eyes on a very agreeable girl, neatly dressed, who was sitting close by me. She lay half reclined, supporting herself with one hand on the grass, while the other, which was stretched over my breast, held a bottle of salts: but my eyes were hardly open when she arose, and, taking a step or two backwards, with her looks still fixed on me, told me, with an air of great humanity, that she was glad to see me alive, and asked me how I did. I thanked her, and complained of a violent pain in my head; she was sorry for it, she said, and wished me a good-night. I was then sitting up, and seeing her about to go, desired her to stay a little, and accept of my company; but she modestly refused me. She told me, she wished me well, and again bid me good-night; and, without turning her head, walked away as fast as she could. I still continued sitting in the same posture, when a few drops of blood trickling down my face, I lifted up my hand to wipe them away, and moving it towards the place where I felt the greatest pain, was surprized to find a handkerchief tied round my head, to stop the bleeding of a small wound; for I was so stunned with the fall, that I never perceived it before. I was pleased with the pretty girl's good-nature; and the next Sunday, waiting for her coming out of church, having before got the handkerchief washed, returned it with many thanks. She smiled, and told me I was very little obliged to her, since she did no more for me than what she would have done for any other person in the same condition; and very coldly, but civilly, saying—"Your servant," turned away to a young woman; and, taking hold of her arm, prevented my saying any more.'

'Poor

'Poor man!' said I, laughing, 'what a disappointment was this! I suppose you were a little mortified at it?'—'No, Madam,' replied he; 'indeed I was not. I had returned the handkerchief, and that was all the view I had in speaking to her. I looked upon her as a deserving girl; and was pleased, that though I had not discharged the obligation, I had paid a debt of honour.' Here, observing me smile—'Excuse me, Madam,' added he, 'for making use of a word, which, I am sure, does not become the mouth of such a one as me; but, even plowmen know what honour means, and, though they do not make use of the word, observe what is meant by it.' Lucius said he was in the right, and desired him to proceed, without minding my looks. On which he resumed—

'As I had, frequently, an opportunity of seeing her, this calm esteem made me sometimes single her out for conversation. I overtook her, by accident, in the fields, going a milking; I walked her pace, and sometimes, when she was returning back, carried her milk-pail: and, by this means, I insensibly learnt, from her mind, what I ought to feel in my own. The modest simplicity of her actions, the innocency of her looks, and the goodness of her heart, which was sure to be affected whenever an object of compassion was near, were those charms which I could not resist; and they would, indeed, have been too much for me, had her good sense been less remarkable. I was soon convinced that what she had done for me was purely the effect of her goodness. For a long time she strove to avoid me, so that it was by slow degrees I learned her value. She began to have an esteem for me. I thought I deserved no other character than that of her friend; I told her so, and she was not displeased. Innocent in all, she had no idea of love, nor was the name mentioned. At sheep-shearing, at the wakes, and at harvest-home, she was constantly invited by my master's daughters, and I joined in the jovial merriment. Our esteem for each other encreased, till, at last, it ripened into love: and, when this was known to ourselves, we were frightened at the difficulties which lay

before us; she told me her story, and persuaded me never to see her more.

'Her mother, a woman of sense, and very fond of books, took care of her infancy, and gave her too a taste for reading, and embellished her mind with many useful hints on the excellency of a virtuous character; but she soon died, and left her to the management of a weak and hard-hearted father, who marrying a woman much younger than himself, suffered her to be treated with the greatest inhumanity. But I will not trouble you with the severities she told me she met with from a wretch of no principles, a cruel step-mother, whose delight it was to give her uneasiness. Her aunt was enraged to see her sister's child treated so ill; she took her home, and it was at her house she lived when I used to have the pleasure of seeing her. An uncle of hers, who resided in London, has lately left her a hundred pounds, which is all her fortune; for though her father is reckoned to be worth between three and four hundred pounds, she has no expectation from him, as he has now a child by his second wife, who rules him as she pleases.

'I have not seen her this month, except at church; but with what reluctance I have submitted to this, no words can express. I thought her above me. I feared to bring upon her the reproaches of her relations, who, to be sure, would never consent to our happiness; to her marrying so poor a man; one so much beneath her. But your generosity, Sir, has removed this obstacle. I am in raptures when I think of it. How shall I express my gratitude! How describe a joy, which no words can paint! It is too much! You are too good, and I am too happy!'

Well, Madam, was I not in the right to represent this innocent youth as a person proper to make a shining figure in a pastoral? But you see he is above the rank of the Hobbinol of Gay, and would better suit the more dignified character of Pope's, or Phillips's gentle swains, who, with a greater dignity of sentiment, attune the warbling pipe to more lofty, more graceful, and harmonious numbers.

About an hour after this, the man returned

returned with Clod. Mr. Manly, without the least design of alarming the farmer, had, inadvertently, sent Robin for him; whom he no sooner set his eyes on, than he recollected that he had seen him before; and being told that it was his master that went in to drink with him, after he had bought a load of hay, he was in a most terrible fright: he, therefore, came trembling, and entered the hall, where Mr. Manly had seated himself to receive him, with the air of a man going to receive sentence of death; and having made an awkward bow as he came in, slunk into a corner. He was desired to come forwards, which he did very slowly, looking downwards, and knitting his brows; and then stood before the awful little man, with a fear that made his lips quiver with a convulsive motion. When he was asked how his wife did, and whether she still continued the same submissive creature he had represented her; he looked very silly, and scratching his head, answered, 'Yes.'—'Then you are your own master,' said he again, 'you are above being ruled by your wife; and, as you made her keep her distance, she must not presume to advise or direct you in any thing that does not concern her.'—'Yes,' was answered again. 'Then,' rejoined Lucius, 'you take the whole blame, and all the guilt of this affair, upon yourself. I find I was mistaken; I thought you might have been teased into it by the importunity of a wicked woman; a crime that would have admitted of some alleviation; and then, though you would have more weakness, yet you would have less guilt.'

The man stared, and bit his lips; and, at last, stammering, cried—'But—but—' but shu did persuade me to fell the trees, or I had no done it. 'Shu does what shu pleases wi' me, and I conno' help it. I thowt no harm.'—'Thought no harm!' cried Lucius; 'what, is there no harm in robbing your landlord?'—'Ay, ay,' cried the man, 'there is harm enough in that. But I mean, I thought no harm in telling you such woundy lees about my wife, for I am asheam'd, and wud no' ha' people think me such an old foo'; yet I love her for aw that.'—'I find, however,' said Lucius, with a magisterial air, 'your word is not to be taken;

'but produce your counter-lease'. He now pulled it out of his pocket; and, with a look that shewed him ready to sink with fear, gave it to Lucius, who just cast his eye on the preamble, and returning it, ordered him to read it himself: but that was impossible; for, after he had read two or three short words, and spelt a long one, Lucius observed, that his hand shook to such a degree, that he would never be able to go through with it.

I was standing all this while in a gallery that, leading to some chambers, crosses the hall; and, looking very attentively over the iron rails, was listening, and, at the same time, contemplating on my Sancho, seated below me, in his two-armed chair; that formidable appearance, which struck such terror into the self-condemned farmer. Just at this time, the venerable old man, whose name I might have told you before is Trueman, (but since I tell you so now, it is as well) entered with his son, and looking stedfastly at the farmer, stepped up to Lucius, and desired to speak a word with him in private. He arose from the seat of justice, and walking aside, they whispered for half a minute, and then the old man, in great haste, ran out of the hall. The judge seemed pleased; gave a nod, which signified a kind of assent; and, returning to his seat, took the lease, and giving it to young Trueman, desired him to read it, which he had no sooner done, than Lucius began—'Here you find, that you have not only forfeited your lease, but, besides, are to pay me one hundred pounds, over and above the value of the trees you have unlawfully cut down.'

At this instant, the gentle Mrs. Clod, with a child in her arms, burst into the hall, and without the least regard to any body present, directed her discourse to her husband. 'Ah ye foo, ye block-head, yo!' cried she as loud as she could bawl: 'see what you han browt us to. This is yo'r wife doings, ye oaf yo!' Old Clod looked now more aghast then ever, and with his eyes fixed on his wife, who stood behind him, desired her to hold her tongue: but she, lifting up her fist, replied, with great fury—'Hold my tongue, ye villain! hold my tongue! See this poor baby, ye unnatural brute! Yo ha' ruined us aw; ye have!' Clod observing her

her fist held up in a menacing posture, and hearing these ungrateful sounds, with his head still turned behind him, sidled nearer and nearer to Lucius, as the less terrible object of the two; who, assuming a most haughty air, commanded her to be silent; at which, she running forwards, and pushing between Lucius and her husband, (when, in an instant, those eyes, which before shot lightning, now let fall a plenteous shower) blubbered very dismally, and begged him to pity her, and that poor, pretty, dear, sweet, helpless baby; and insisted, that though it was no great matter what became of such a wicked man, such a vile rogue, as her husband, yet it would be the greatest cruelty to ruin her, and so fine a child, so sweet a wench, as that she held in her arms. But, alas! the judge was deaf to all she could say; he ordered a servant to turn her out of doors; but she fell on her knees, and, with great earnestness, endeavoured to persuade him to suffer her to stay. This favour, at last, was granted, only upon condition of silence; which was no sooner done, than Clod, seeming to revive and recover spirits, from his indignation, cried out—‘I could no’ ha’ thowt it: shu wud ha’ me into jail: well, I’ll see who shall suffer; I ha’ another dowter, and her mother wud na’ ha’ served me so.’

Lucius now represented the heinousness of the crime, and insisted upon the penalty: and ordering young Trueman to fill up a bond which he had before sent for, the farmer signed it with less reluctance than I could have imagined, only repeating a curse or two on his wife, loud enough for her to hear, and crying—‘I’ll be her foo’ no longer; I ha’ another dowter.’

The filling up of the bond took up some time, for our young steward was not yet very expert at his business, and his father was not there to assist him: but the ceremony of signing and sealing was hardly over, when the good old man entered, introducing an elderly woman, and a very pretty young woman of about seventeen, whom he led to Lucius. Our judge arose, and bowed; and, at the same instant, farmer Clod cried out—‘My poor dowter!’ and young Trueman dropped an ink standish, which he was carrying into his office. Clod’s wife gave them all a curse, and grumbling,

left the place, while he seized one of the girl’s hands, and throwing his other arm about her neck, gave her a hearty smack, crying—‘I am o’most ruined; but no matter, I deserve it. Wull yo’ forgi’ me, wench? Yo are my dowter, and yo shall be my dowter, in spite of the devil.’ Young Trueman had, during this speech, seized her other hand, which Clod had neither power nor resolution to prevent, and which, with an air of native innocence, she cheerfully resigned to her lover. Her eyes were in an instant turned from her father, and fixed with great softness on the young man, who gazed on her with a look of mingled tenderness and rapture.

This, Madam, was a scene which at first I could not comprehend, and so strange a turn filled me at once with curiosity; and held me in an agreeable suspense: but it was a curiosity too violent to suffer me to continue at a distance an uninterested spectator. I therefore ran down stairs, when old Trueman, with the elderly woman, having joined themselves to Lucius, to whom they were talking, and accidentally fronting the other three, I could not help saying with a laugh—‘Well, if after all you are disposed for a country dance, I hope I may be allowed to make one.’ They all smiled; and after the usual ceremony of a few bows and curtsies, and your humble servant, and the like, Lucius addressed himself again to Clod—

‘You have now performed,’ said he, ‘the conditions I demanded; nor shall I make any reflections on what is passed, since this would expose you before your relations. My thoughts are now taken up with the general happiness of your whole family. If I insisted so strenuously on your paying the fine, it was only with a view to secure some part of the fortune of a daughter whom you have neglected; and by giving the bond to this young man, whom you must now look upon as your son, I return it again into the same family; since, as my steward, he does not need this to make him an advantageous match for your daughter.’ Here Clod, without stirring a step, stretched out his neck, to stare at Trueman; and seeming more and more to recover himself, drew his daughter back a little, crying—‘A proper mon; hay, wench. Gi’ me yo’r hond;’ which Trueman doing, he gave it a hearty shake,

shake, saying—'God bless yo' together. 'I wish it with aw my heart. Shu is a 'good wench; I'll say that for her.' And then turning to Lucius, bowed so low, and gave such a scrape, that he had like to have fallen upon his face. The young woman blushed, and curtsied; and Lucius having by this time found the bond, which he pulled out of his pocket, presented it to Trueman, saying—'Here, take this, and I wish you 'all imaginable happiness; while he received it with a look of gratitude and joy. Lucius resumed—'I am sensible 'that what you told me was in confidence: I therefore remit of the rigour 'of my first demand. I return you 'your counter-lease, and shall sell the 'trees myself; I only desire you to set 'the same number of plants in their 'room.'—'Ay, marry wull I,' cried he, as he received it, 'and as many 'more to boot; and rot me if ever shu 'make me such a rogue again.' Now nothing was heard but joy and congratulations. The young woman's aunt, (for that was the person that came in with her) as she loved her niece, was very liberal of her thanks and acknowledgments; she kissed the young couple, and insisted on providing the wedding dinner, as soon as they could be asked in due form at church: for, as she was no friend to licences, she was resolved that the marriage should not be performed till after this ceremony was completed, which she thought necessary to render it valid. The happy couple were the least tumultuous in their joy, for that was principally expressed on both sides by the eloquent language of the countenance, which sufficiently told us all they could have uttered; and, perhaps, they chose that we should rather see than hear the expressions of their mutual tenderness: but it is more probable that, wholly taken up with the presence of each other, they never thought of us at all, and while they were silent, did not suspect that any in the company could understand a language which they doubtless imagined peculiar to themselves. But it was not so with old Clod, who knew no other way of expressing his joy than by capering about the hall, blessing the squire and his good lady, kissing his daughter, and hugging young Trueman. In short, we adjourned into a parlour; when wine, ale, and tea, were called for, which every one partook of

as they pleased. Nor was the cold fire-
loin forgot; which by ancient custom is a joint devoted to hospitality; for this was placed on a sideboard, near the farmer, whose uneasiness having cost him a dinner, he wisely, upon the return of his spirits and his stomach, did not suffer it to stand neglected. At last, they all took their leave, but not till our young steward had shewn his intended bride her future apartment, which Lucius, in the presence of the aunt, promised should be immediately furnished for their reception.

You see, Madam, that innocence and peace do not always bless the cottage: vice sometimes finds an entrance under the lowest roof; and care and sorrow can hover over the brow of humble virtue. With these sage remarks, which inform you of nothing but what you knew before, I conclude my letter, having no more to add, but that I am, and shall ever be, your ladyship's most affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

P. S. Upon recollection, I think I ought not to have informed you that the wicked woman, who makes no inconsiderable character in the above letter, is a step-mother: but, surely, you will not do me the injury to suspect that, by inserting it, I would insinuate a reflection upon others, who, with the name, have quite different dispositions. A certain lady, whom you dearly love, and to whom your cousin owes ten thousand obligations, is a glorious exception; and I know some other ladies, besides Miss Biddy, who, from a mother-in-law, have received all the tender indulgences, and all the obligations they could reasonably expect from a real parent. If you shew your aunt this letter, as I find you have done some others, don't let her overlook this postscript.

LETTER XXXV.

DEAR MADAM,

YOU see what a variety of importunesses your desire of frequently hearing from me has forced me to commit; but what else can be expected from rural scenes, which, though the haunt of lovers, are the most unfruitful of intrigues? for where almost every one acts from nature, nothing of the marvellous can

can be expected. Yet I shall now open a scene of wonders, that will give you the greatest astonishment.

One day last week, to our no small surprise, we received a pressing invitation to dine with Mr. Stevens, the sprightly old gentleman, whose character* you were so well pleased with, and whom we had not seen since the disgrace of his superlatively pious sister Prudilla†. Our desire of renewing the acquaintance of so agreeable a companion, made us readily comply with his request. Lucius therefore ordered the coach to be immediately got ready, and we set out soon after.

Upon our arrival, we were received by the gentleman himself, with his usual affability and freedom; but with less of that humorous gaiety in his look which indicates the friend and cheerful companion. After paying us some handsome, though late, compliments on our nuptials, he informed us, that his sister, who he confessed had injured us in his esteem, being now dangerously ill of a consumption, desired to see us, that she might unburthen her mind as much, as possible, by confessing her guilt, and endeavouring to obtain our pardon; and that, as she was now awake, if we pleased, he would introduce us himself. We immediately consented, and followed him to her chamber. We found her seated in an easy chair, one arm hanging negligently down by the side, which, by it's thinness, seemed immoderately long. She was worn to a skeleton; her head leaning back in a languid posture, discovered a thin, pale, and dejected countenance, which, the moment she raised it, expressed all the signs of inward confusion, horror, and guilt. She fixed her eyes on us, sighed, and waving her hand, desired us, with a weak voice, to sit down by her, which we immediately did; when Mr. Stevens left us, and, before he shut the door, assured his sister, that he would take care that nobody should come to interrupt us.

What an object was here! How wretchedly depraved must that mind be, that could triumph before an enemy so reduced, so humble, and so worthy of pity! Lucius could not: his concern was extremely visible; and, though I never saw him in a more sprightly-humour than he was in the whole morning,

it was now instantly vanished; and his countenance had an air of solemn gravity and compassion. With a tone of great humanity, he asked how she did. She thanking him, answered—'I am extremely ill. O, Sir, I am going—I am going to that Being, who will not be imposed upon by false appearances. Oh! the horrors of a guilty mind! O conscience! conscience! I have plotted your ruin—I have endeavoured to destroy your peace—your fortune—your happiness here—your soul here—after!' Then, wiping her eyes—'Oh! I ask your pardon—Can you forgive me? Can you? Will you?' This she spoke with such a beseeching look, and uttered with so much earnestness, that it would have been barbarous to have kept her any longer in suspense. Lucius, therefore, immediately replied, in that tender tone which nature gives to the voice when the heart is deeply affected with compassion—'Yes, Madam, I heartily forgive you. But why this eagerness? Do you think me incapable of pity?'—'No, Sir,' added she, 'I know you are not: but, alas! you know not what you say! You don't know how much I have been your enemy. But don't—don't withdraw your forgiveness,' continued she, looking stedfastly in his face; and then casting her eyes on the ground, added—'It was I that caused your father to be arrested. It was I—I that persuaded his creditors to throw him in a jail.'—'How!' cried Lucius, reddening; and then, after a few moments reflection, resumed with a sigh—'Well, this is not a time for reproaches.'—'Reproaches!' cried she; 'I deserve them all—I know I deserve them all, and am prepared to receive them. O Madam! I loved Lucius with a criminal passion, and, under a veil of sanctity, thought to conceal myself from the eyes of the world; but I could not do it from the all-piercing eye of Heaven. But my plots were discovered, and you were a witness of the shameful, but just, treatment I met with at your aunt's, when all my contrivances to break the match betwixt you and this gentleman were laid open. Your aunt's reproaches sharpened the sting of my guilty conscience; your and your cousin's triumph over

* See Letter IV, Letter VIII,

† Letter XIX.

me made my mind boil with rage and shame, and disappointed love. I returned home—I contrived ways of revenge, and sought still to destroy your peace. At last, I thought of Mr. Mandy. I knew some of his creditors; I flew to them, and, under a pretence of visiting their wives, indulged the malice of this wicked heart. This, at first, was all my view: but soon, Madam, I recollected that your husband had a tender and generous mind: I hoped his duty, and his affection to his father, would be too strong for his passion for you—I hoped he would relieve him, and I was not deceived. I prepared to let your father know that he was an impostor, that he had greatly lessened his fortune; and, by this means, thought myself again infallibly certain of breaking the match: but soon I learned that these hopes were vain; Lucius had himself informed him of the whole affair—He was forgiven, and I plunged in fresh despair, O Lucius! I durst not now see your father. Oh! a guilty conscience! a guilty conscience! Crime followed crime, till I sinned beyond all hopes of mercy.—‘It is an ingenuous confession, however,’ cried Lucius, ‘and I heartily forgive you. May God forgive you too! I’ll promise for my father.’—‘I thank you,’ said she, and stopped; and then continuing silent for some time, she at last fixed her eyes on Lucius, and resumed—‘I have another affair, but I cannot mention it to you, I cannot speak of it—but, as it is more necessary to be discovered than any thing I have yet said, I have wrote it down. Here, look at this paper—read my shame, and then let me speak to you alone. You will know it time enough, Madam. I can scarcely think of it before you, and must therefore beg of you to retire.’

You won’t wonder, Madam, that I was very much surprized at this proposal, which appeared the more extraordinary, by her manner of introducing it. What could I think? It had an odd appearance. Lucius seemed thoroughly sensible of this, and therefore endeavoured to detain me. ‘This is very strange!’ cried he: ‘What concern can I have in any secret affair of yours, which my Felicia may not be acquainted with? Or what can that be, which is fit only for me, and not for her to

know?’—‘Dear Madam—dear Sir,’ obliged me,’ cried she, with an earnestness that pleaded more than her words: ‘surely this request cannot be hard for you to grant!’ Lucius made no answer, but, receiving the paper, went to the window to read it. As she sat with her back to the light, he might do it as safely here as in another room, without raising her blushes by the disorder of his looks; and, perhaps, her chair was set in this manner on purpose. Mean while I arose, and walking out of the room, pulled the door after me; which I had hardly done, when I heard Lucius stamp, and cry out—‘I a child by you, Madam! ’Tis false! ’Tis a notorious lye.’ And then, running to the door, desired me to come in, with a look that shewed him in a most violent passion. ‘It seems,’ added he, ‘that this important affair, so improper for you to hear, is what you have an immediate concern in; she has the impudence to say here—but read it yourself. What a vile, scandalous lye! I a child by her!’

As I was but just on the outside of the door when he called me, I immediately returned; and, being much less disturbed than he, had the precaution to shut it, as I entered the room. I must confess that I was in a very queer situation of mind: I was far from being easy. But it is impossible for me to give you any idea of Lucius’s behaviour: he stamped, he stared, his colour changed from a deep scarlet to a livid paleness; and then looking towards the chair, with rage and contempt strongly painted in his countenance—‘Is this your repentance?’ cried he, ‘wicked and abandoned wretch! In such a condition, too!—Your affectation of modesty!—My wife must not know it—You can’t speak of it before her!’—‘Why so warm, my dear?’ replied I, with a smile: ‘if there is nothing in it, it can only serve to encrease our detestation of a wretch that, so near her death, could be guilty of so vile a slander.’—‘If!’ cried he, with a snappish hastiness: ‘It is an absolute lye—she is the last woman that I would be guilty of such an affair with—such an antidote to desire!—I should be as much ashamed of my taste as of the crime.’

We were now alarmed by an affair of a very different kind; for Prudilla, who had heard every word, unable to support the shock of being treated in so severe a manner,

manner, at this instant fainted away, and fell out of her chair; and we beheld a pale and almost lifeless being lie stretched out on the hearth, in a manner that called for immediate relief. To what strange revolutions is the human mind subject! Not all our indignation, not all the fury of passion, could prevent our running immediately to her assistance, and giving her that succour that her case required. Lucius raised her head from under the grate, where she was in danger of being burnt, and, with my assistance, lifted her into her chair, and there held her, while I ran to call her brother. He came, but it was near half an hour before we brought her to herself. At last, she opened her eyes, and her brother forced her to drink a glass of wine and hartshorn; but she no sooner recovered her spirits, than she burst into tears; nor could she utter any thing but sighs for a considerable time, endeavouring all the while to conceal her blushes by covering her face. At last, she desired her brother to leave us; and, when he was gone, not a word was spoke for near two minutes more: for she was so weak, that Lucius, dreading some ill consequence might again attend his not being able to master his temper, resolved to let her begin first, and to wait with patience till he could hear what she had to say in vindication of this *notorious lye*, as he called it. This he let me know as soon as Mr. Stevens left the room, by writing his resolution on a piece of paper, which he easily did, as there was a pen and ink upon the table, which stood close at his elbow. I began to be tired of this suspense, when she began, with a deep sigh—'Now you know my shame; but I did not think I should be treated in this manner. O, you are very cruel, you might have read the paper out.'—'Is it not false?' cried Lucius; 'had you ever a child by me?'—'Pray let me go on,' said she; 'you ought, indeed, to have read the paper out, before you fell into such a passion.'—'Did not I read one lye at the beginning?' interrupted he again; 'to what purpose should I read on to find more?'—'Hear me, hear me,' rejoined she, 'I take the shame and guilt upon myself, why should you not then hear me? You lay at our house about two years ago; twice you lay here; if you remember, it rained, and you could not go home. Oh, how

shall I tell the rest! You was waked by a woman in your bed.' Lucius blushed, and looked at me, and immediately replied—'I acknowledge it, Madam; but proceed. I left you while you were asleep; I was gone before it was light; and the first time you lay here, you found our chambermaid's handkerchief lying by the side of the bed, which, the next morning, she owned. The odiousness of my crime made me glad to conceal it; I blushed at my own wickedness, and, to preserve my character, left the handkerchief.'

'I own it all, Madam,' cried Lucius, 'and I sincerely beg your pardon. Indeed, I ought not to have been so warm; but I beg you would forgive a language which I acknowledge did not become me. My suspicion fell where you intended it should; but how barbarous, how ungenerous, was it in you, to sully the character of an innocent creature, by laying your guilt to her charge!—'If that be so great a fault,' returned she, 'I have much to answer for. Oh, I am a guilty creature! but the shame I then felt for my faults, though it prompted me to do all I could to hide them, though it made me blush in private, and almost hate myself, was nothing to the horror I now feel.'—'Pray, Madam,' said I, 'proceed with your story; I long to hear what is become of the child.'—'Lucius, Madam, may remember,' continued she, 'that I went to London, about four months after the last time he lay at our house; there, instead of visiting my friends, I lived very retired, and, pretending that my husband was gone abroad, was well respected, and, at last, brought to bed of a fine girl. After my return home, I sent for it into the country, and it is now at Clifton, where it passes for the child of a poor woman, whom I had taken a fancy to, and resolved to keep out of charity. In that paper is a direction where to find it; and in that paper too, you will see that I have left this living witness of my shame seven thousand pounds, which is all my fortune; and if she dies, it is to be equally divided between you and my brother: for you are the person I love dearest, and have most injured. But my brother will shew you my will; he has consented

to

‘to every thing; and, therefore, I have chosen him and you for my executors. But I am quite spent—I hope I shall see you after dinner.’ This we promised, and retired.

I don’t know, Madam, whether I can vindicate to myself my thus laying open a secret affair, that reflects so much upon the character of my dear Lucius. How triumphantly you cry out—‘O the man of immaculate virtue, the modest, the sober, the religious Lucius! in bed with a superannuated old maid! Mighty pretty! Who could have thought it?’ But however you exclaim, I know you will be pleased to find him a little lower in your esteem; or else what is become of all your pretty hints—that he was too good to be married—That you should not like a husband so extremely perfect—and that you thought it necessary that a man, who was to be your companion for life, should have some faults, that he might be better able to excuse yours. Think of this, and cease your exclamations. As to Prudilla’s conduct, it is vastly more inexcusable; but I consider her as an humble penitent, and, therefore, shall not expatiate on her crimes. I have been melted by her tears; I have heartily forgiven her, and this has made me omit several speeches which had I inserted, though they might have kept up the enthusiastick part of her character, would have weakened your pity, by making her appear ridiculous.

I have the honour to be, Madam, your ladyship’s most sincere, and most affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXVI.

DEAR MADAM,

WE had staid so long with Prudilla, that, when we went down, we found the dinner almost spoiled; for Mr. Stevens, imagining that this might be the last time of our seeing her alive, was not willing to interrupt us, being very sensible that we had affairs upon our hands of much greater moment.

The cloth was no sooner taken away, than Mr. Stevens, having lighted his pipe, addressed himself to Lucius, and told him, that his sister had desired him to shew him the will before it was sealed

up. ‘You know, already, I suppose,’ said he, ‘that you and I are appointed her executors, and I don’t doubt but she has told you in what manner she has disposed of her fortune. Tell me now, honestly, don’t you think my sister out of her senses? Self-interest, perhaps, may bias me, but you are an unprejudiced person: therefore, let me know what you think of her leaving seven thousand pounds to a stranger. Had she left it to a female friend, to you, or any other man of merit, I should not have cared, I would not have troubled myself at it’s going out of the family; but to leave it to a little brat, that can but just go alone—Pox! it’s enough to make one mad.’ Here he began to puff, as if he had a mind to smother us; and, in an instant, we were surrounded with a cloud of smoke. Lucius seemed extremely confounded; when, to give him time to think of a proper answer, I replied—‘She has taken a fancy to the child, I suppose; perhaps it may belong to somebody very dear to her.’—‘A fancy,’ Madam!’ cried he; ‘it is a very odd fancy, that she, who never in her life could endure children, should, at these years, take such a fancy to one, as to leave it all she is worth. I very bluntly told her so; and, as I refused to have any thing to do in this affair, without better reasons than she was pleased to yield me, she referred me to you, to give me satisfaction.’—‘That I can easily do,’ said Lucius; ‘you are her brother, and I have a right to know the whole affair, which I, though most concerned, was ignorant of till this morning: Suppose the child should be her own?’—‘Why, aye,’ cried the old man, after a short silence; and then deliberately poured out a mighty cloud, which he had been collecting from the time Lucius began to speak—‘there is something in that, indeed: but how could she, who is so cursed modest, that she could not mention it to her own brother, tell it you?’—‘Who should she tell it to, but to the child’s father?’ said I. ‘The child’s father!’ he rejoined, holding his pipe in his hand, and staring with a look of the utmost astonishment; ‘what, Lucius the child’s father! he! the modest Lucius! my young philosopher! he make a whore of my sister! Do you know, young man,’ added he, ‘what you deserve

deserve for doing our family this honour? Suppose I should order my fellows to cool your courage in the horse-pond, should not I serve you right? Hay, tell me that, you young dog? Could you find nobody, but my sister, to make a whore of? A woman old enough to be your mother, ye little whelp! So you must come here preaching your damned nonsense, about virtue and honour, and the devil knows what; and I, like an old fool, must sit listening and hugging you to my bosom, while you, forsooth, was only waiting for an opportunity to debauch my sister! Here he started up, crying, 'The horse-pond! Ay, and it shall be the horse-pond, if it cost me a thousand pounds! By the Lord Harry, I'll make a soufed mackarel of him!'

Lucius, who at first sat with a kind of pusillanimous shame, as, perhaps, imagining, that as Mr. Stevens thought him the aggressor, he had an undoubted right to complain, now started from his chair, and stepping between him and the door, locked it, and put the key in his pocket; then turning hastily round, and clapping his hand to his sword, which he drew half out of the scabbard, he cried—'Hold, Sir, I shall take upon me to secure the door; you must not go out without my leave: how far I have injured either you or your sister, she may, if she pleases, inform you; for I think it beneath me to palliate any fault of mine, by laying it upon her.' This was spoke in a resolute tone; but the old man, not seeming to mind what he said, having his whole thoughts taken up with his posture, cried out—'There is a young philosopher now! a pretty fellow to make me a prisoner in my own house; and then caking his eyes on the glittering steel, Well done, Don John! There is a dog for you now! He has lain with the sister, and now would murder the brother! A fine philosopher!—But I won't draw—I'll ha' none of your cold iron in my guts—I'd see both you and sister at old Nick first! Then wheeling upon his heel, he added, 'You shall as soon roast as spit me.'

The moment Lucius ran to the door, I flew to the window, and throwing open the sash, called Robin and John: but hearing the old man declare his aversion to cold iron, I drew in my

hand, and was going to shut the window, when he came to me, and putting out his head, first threw away his pipe, and then called out Sam and Harry: but we both called in vain; for, as we found afterwards, they were all drinking together in the cellar, with the butler. I was, all this while, fretting, trembling, and blaming myself, as the cause of all this disturbance, by the imprudent manner in which I had discovered the affair; and was the more uneasy, as I thought Lucius had sufficient reason to be offended: and this reflection was so painful, that, stupid with vexation, for some time I had not the power of contriving any probable means of setting all right again. At last, I recollected the paper which Prudilla had given to Lucius, and he to me; and, as the old man was still leaning on my shoulder, and calling for his servants, I desired him to be pacified, and told him that, on condition he would sit down and be easy, I would convince him that Mr. Manly was much less to blame than he imagined. Mr. Stevens, finding that it was to no purpose to expect any assistance from his servants, readily complied; and, seating himself in the window, while Lucius took a chair next the door, I gave him the paper, saying—'Here, Sir, is a short account of the whole affair, written by her own hand.' He took it, and mumbling to himself, uttered now and then an articulate sound, making his remarks to himself, as he went on—'*Blushes!—Die with shame!*' And then raising his voice—'*Be surprized to hear that you have had a child by me!*' 'Be surprized to hear it!' cried he. 'What the deuce! did he get her with child in his sleep! "*Remember—*" "*asleep!*" 'Aye, it must be so.' Here he burst out a laughing, crying—'Well, this is very extraordinary! Get a child in his sleep! No, that can't be it neither; for she says, "*he remembered it.*" 'Well, let's see.—'O, I have it, "*A woman came to bed to him in his sleep.*" 'Aye, that may be; but she did not get him with child, I hope. "*Early in the morning—dark.*" 'The deuce! What a rare modest sister I have got! Well, it can't be helped. Why, now I ought, like an ass, to ask his pardon. Faith, I should not have wondered if

‘ if he had sworn a rape against her. ‘ *The handkerchief!*’ O, the fly devil!—and so he was, to suspect Jenny Law, as pretty a girl as any in the parish.’

Here, tearing the paper, he went to Lucius, crying at every step, ‘ I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon, with all my heart. Odso, what a racket have I been making in vindication of the honour of my sister, when her honour is not worth a button!’

They now shook hands, and in a few minutes were as good friends as if nothing had happened. Prudilla had dined in her chamber, and afterwards laid down for about an hour; and then sent to inform us, that she should be glad of our company. She now looked much better than when we entered the room before; notwithstanding her having, since that time, suffered a very great expence of spirits. This might be occasioned by her having now no more painful secrets to disclose. Her countenance was tolerably serene; and, though she could not look upon us without confusion, it was a confusion unmixed with that ghastly horror which before gave an additional wanness to her discoloured cheeks and lips. She was rising as we entered the room; and, as she took the same seat, we took ours. After enquiring how she did, and particularly, whether she had received any hurt from her fall from the chair, which she assured us she had not, she began—

‘ I have now discovered my shame to you both; and, whatever you think of me, I desire you would not, when I am gone, expose me among my friends. I have now little else to do, but to prepare for that other world to which I am hastening. Death is a dreadful stroke, but I must go through it. It is guilt, it is guilt that makes it terrible. I am very loth to die. It will be your duty, Sir, to take care of this child. I am very sensible, that the dear infant has no right to any part of the fortune you obtained by your marriage with this lady; and therefore I give her mine. To speak my mind freely, it is with great uneasiness that I support the thought of leaving her to such an atheist as you. My religious principles are very different from yours; or, rather, I question whether you have any religion at all. However, you are a moral man;

‘ and if mere morality would save you, you bid fairer than most others for happiness. The morality of the best is imperfect; and, therefore, not fit to justify us in the sight of God.—But, alas! why do I talk of morality! I that build all my hopes on your doing justice to my child, in giving her, if not religious, at least virtuous principles, drawn from this morality! I, who have so heinously sinned, that I hardly durst hope for mercy! I, that have abused all the good sense that God has given me, and behaved like one that never tasted of the sweetness of his grace! Oh, I feel the corruptness of my own heart! I was surely born in sin, and in iniquity did my mother conceive me. I am sensible that my own righteousness is but as filthy rags.’

It was now impossible for me, Madam, to forbear smiling. I could not help giving my assent to these last words, and saying to myself, that I believed so too. Lucius kept his countenance pretty well: he heard himself loaded with abundance of religious abuse, without the least discomposure in his look: he shook his head, listened still with pity in his eyes, and never once attempted to interrupt her. After a good deal more to the same purpose, she let us know that she had had a pious education, and a very early experimental sense of religion. That, as she was converted betimes, as she thought then, though now she doubted it, she had always a great abhorrence of vice; but grew proud of her religious attainments; and this, added to a temper naturally peevish, made her censorious. At last she loved Lucius; she struggled against her weakness; she represented to herself the difference of their age, and the little probability that he would marry a woman twenty years older than himself: however, she strove to allure him by her behaviour; but it was all in vain: she then changed her conduct; her passion became criminal; and, after a struggle between that and her conscience, flattered herself, that, as she had such proof of her being one of the elect, it was impossible she should ever be a cast-away; and, confiding in this, she resolved to give way to her passion: she then drank in iniquity like water; and going on from one crime to another, sinned beyond all hopes of mercy. Poor Lucius was the cause of all: had she never

never known him, she might have still been virtuous: but love made her commit what her conscience condemned. She could not bear her own reflections; she, therefore, endeavoured to conceal her actions from the light, from herself, from him, from the world.

This, Madam, is the substance of a very long discourse, of which I was heartily weary; nor should I trouble you with it, if it did not seem necessary to give you a portrait of her mind, and to let you see how far even religion, when raised upon false principles, had an influence in corrupting her heart. It was a gloomy system, collected from abstruse passages in Scripture, in opposition to the plainest, big with absurdity, contradiction, and blasphemy; contrary to every sentiment we can form of the Deity, as a wise and good being, and to the plainest dictates of unprejudiced reason.

Lucius did not chuse to make any answer to this fine harangue, which she did not conclude without giving him some exhortations to repentance: and, indeed, she had drawn it out to such a length, and her spirits were so exhausted, that she was obliged, immediately after, to lie down: we therefore took our leave, promising to see her again in two or three days time. We drank tea with Mr. Stevens, who behaved in the most friendly manner. The will was read, and he had now no objection to being his sister's executor.

We had scarcely drove from the door, when I observed that Lucius appeared extremely thoughtful. We were now free from company, and perhaps he might dread lest I should take hold of this first opportunity to make him some reproaches: but I was resolved to disappoint him. He watched my looks; he eyed me very attentively from time to time, and seemed desirous of divining my thoughts, while, with a modest diffidence in his countenance, he seemed to wait till I began the disagreeable subject. I believe we had been full five minutes in the coach without speaking a word to each other: at last, I began with asking him, what were his thoughts of Prudilla? 'I hardly know,' said he, 'what to think of her; she has confessed herself guilty of very black crimes. Could I have consented to conceal my father's misfortunes, I had been justly punished. I must have been ruined.

'What would your father have thought of me?'—'It is very true,' said I, 'it was an infernal scheme; the very idea of it makes me tremble. It was happy for me, that your generous sentiments, which would not suffer you to conceal it, broke all her measures. But the child——' added I, smiling; 'why, I am made a mother at a time when I least thought of it. But did your suspicions fall where she intended they should?'—'Yes, my dear,' said he, giving me a most affectionate look, that seemed to thank me for treating him so gently; 'I returned the handkerchief, which the young woman received, indeed, without a blush: this I perfectly remember. I had never taken notice of her before; and methought she had, with a very agreeable person, an innocence and modesty in her behaviour which I could not tell how to reconcile with the character of a lascivious wanton. I reflected on what I had done; and reflection brought a number of ideas to my mind, that were by no means pleasing. However, I had the honest satisfaction of thinking that I was not her corrupter; and this thought blunted the sharpness of self-reproach. I looked upon her ruin as almost irreparable; and painted to myself, in the strongest colours, the unhappy situation of a girl abandoned to the indulgence of disgraceful appetites, lost to all sense of real virtue and honour, and in the direct road to infamy and misery. I pitied her, and resolved to endeavour, at least, to reclaim her. I found her one day alone; and, seizing the opportunity, I began a lecture on incontinency.'—'O hideous!' interrupted I; 'a pretty gentleman to preach to a girl on that subject!—the supposed partner in her guilt too! Why, I wonder how you could have the confidence to open your mouth about it. The most improper person!'—'No, my dear,' returned Lucius, with a smile, 'I must differ from you: for, supposing her the person, I can't help, even now, thinking myself the most proper man in the world. However, it was with much difficulty that I brought myself to form the resolution, and with more still that I put it in practice. I thought it my duty in a peculiar manner, and encouraged myself with the pleasing prospect of

R — 'saving

' saving a very agreeable girl from ruin.
 ' But, when I had this opportunity, I
 ' knew not how to begin. I was
 ' ashamed of appearing more virtuous
 ' than her, and reproaching her for
 ' an action, which she, I imagined,
 ' thought I ought rather to thank her
 ' for. These last reflections held me
 ' for some time silent; but, at last, I
 ' boldly began, with observing that a
 ' girl so agreeable in her person, and,
 ' to outward appearance, so modest and
 ' prudent, seemed formed by nature for
 ' happiness: and that it was a pity,
 ' that, with so many perfections, she
 ' should destroy all her hopes of enjoy-
 ' ing the pleasures of an innocent love,
 ' all her prospects of a happy marriage;
 ' lose the eternal rewards of heaven;
 ' and inconsiderately plunge herself in
 ' ruin and infamy. She interrupted me,
 ' by telling me, she was surprized to
 ' hear me talk in this manner, and
 ' wondered what I would be at. I then
 ' began to tell her that I was a partner
 ' in her guilt; and that, though I had
 ' not the resolution to withstand the
 ' temptation, yet my conscience re-
 ' proached me for what I had done, and
 ' I repented of my folly. "Let me per-
 ' suade you," said I. She stared—she
 ' believed I was mad—she flew out of
 ' the room, and I—looked like a fool.

' I believe so," replied I, bursting into a
 laugh. "Poor girl! I pity her. I only
 ' with Prudilla had overheard you. But,
 ' I hope the natural innocence of her be-
 ' haviour cured this groundless suspi-
 ' cion."—"In a great measure it did," re-
 ' turned he; "notwithstanding it was rea-
 ' sonable to suppose that a girl, who took
 ' such precaution as to come and go away
 ' in the dark, and who, all the time she
 ' was with me, never spoke louder than
 ' a whisper, would strenuously deny a
 ' fact which she took such pains to
 ' conceal: I was not, therefore, per-
 ' fectly satisfied.—But I can't help
 ' thinking, now I know her innocent,
 ' in how ridiculous a light I must then
 ' appear to her. Two or three months
 ' after, I lay there again; I took the
 ' precaution to lock my door, but I had
 ' not been an hour in bed, when I met
 ' with the same temptation, which, in
 ' spite of all my previous resolutions,
 ' again proved too strong for me. Thus,
 ' perfectly convinced of my own weak-
 ' ness, I resolved never to lie another
 ' night in the same house. But, when-

' ever I went there, I took particular
 ' notice of the young woman's com-
 ' plexion, as well as of her shape: and
 ' in six or eight months time, observing
 ' no marks of her pregnancy, I grew
 ' perfectly easy with respect to her, and
 ' began to blame myself for my unjust
 ' suspicions, though I was still at a loss
 ' where to fix them. Indeed, my dear,
 ' continued he, "I can't help thinking
 ' Prudilla committed a greater crime, in
 ' thus endeavouring to ruin the reputa-
 ' tion of a modest girl, by loading her
 ' with all the infamy of her own guilt,
 ' than in the very actions that gave oc-
 ' casion to it. How depraved must have
 ' been her mind! How lost to every ge-
 ' nerous and humane sentiment!—But
 ' 'tis happy for her, that she has had
 ' time to correct the irregularities of
 ' her passions. Censoriousness, inhu-
 ' manity, and the indulgence of every
 ' selfish passion, are the natural conse-
 ' quences of her sentiments of reli-
 ' gion; a religion, which, respecting
 ' only God, regards every duty to man
 ' as low and contemptible: but so
 ' deeply are the kind affections imprint-
 ' on the heart; so lovely does virtue,
 ' humanity, and generosity, appear to
 ' all mankind; that, however the minds
 ' of individuals are warped by selfish
 ' views, they cannot help secretly ap-
 ' proving this temper in others: and
 ' even those of her sentiments, how-
 ' ever contemptibly they speak of it, ge-
 ' nerally shew by their actions, that
 ' they have the same obligations to na-
 ' ture, the same impulses to goodness,
 ' with the rest of mankind: so that,
 ' however pernicious their religious sen-
 ' timents may appear, with respect to
 ' their tendency, it very rarely happens
 ' that they have really such unhappy,
 ' such horrid effects."

But I will trouble you no longer,
 Madam, with the repetition of a con-
 versation which begins to grow but
 little interesting. You will, I fancy,
 readily believe, that I am now sufficient-
 ly weary; for this is as true as that I am
 your ladyship's constant friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXVII.

YOU find, Madam, by my two
 last letters, that I am arrived at
 the unexpected honour of being a step-
 mother:

mother: but whether I shall behave in such a manner as to support my new dignity with any degree of applause to myself, is a circumstance that I cannot yet be sure of. However, of this I am certain, that I was never in my life half so angry as I am now, at our writers of plays, novels, and romances, for continually drawing a step-mother as a monster in nature; and so terrible a creature, that one would be apt to conceive that she had not one feature that in the least resembled any part of a human being. And, indeed, in all my reading, which, in this way, has been pretty extensive, I can hardly recollect above one or two instances in which this inexorable tyrant had the least advantage above a tiger, a wolf, or a crocodile. That a bad woman should make a bad wife, and a worse step-mother, is not to be wondered at; especially, if covetousness, pride, ill-nature, and an extraordinary fondness for her own children, center in the same breast. But while there are such persons in the world as your ever-honoured aunt, you must be convinced, that an empty name can never change the disposition of the heart, and turn the most mild, the tenderest and most generous minds, into savage cruelty. By her example, Madam, I intend to regulate my conduct; and while I strive to imitate so fine a model, I must be a wretched copyist indeed, if I myself am not tolerably perfect.

Lucius seems extremely pleased at my manner of treating him; and a thousand times has he already thanked me, by his looks, and the most engaging expressions of tenderness. Two days after this day of wonders, we went to pay another visit to Prudilla. I was desirous of seeing the child; and easily imagined, that though Lucius was perfectly silent on this head, he could not avoid being much more so, though his fear of offending me might make him conceal it. As Mr. Stevens had torn the paper which contained a detail of his sister's guilt, we had lost the direction where to find the little creature, whom I now began to consider as one of the family. I, therefore, the evening before, proposed his sending a servant, with a letter, to give them notice when we intended to see them, and to desire that the infant might be brought to their house. Lucius readily embraced this proposal, and with a look that seemed to speak much

more than he expressed, seized hold of my hand, and thanked me for the care I took to anticipate his desires.

The next morning we set out pretty early; and, upon our arrival, Mr. Stevens, handing me out of the coach, conducted us in, when he must needs salute me, under the character of his sister; 'not in law,' said he, 'but against law: however, you are my sister, and you shall be my sister. I hope,' added he, 'you have heartily forgiven the penitent above stairs; if you have, you must let us see it, by taking care of her child: and, by this means, you will greatly oblige, not only me, your brother, and the bantling's uncle and guardian, but our good friend my young philosopher there, the baby's papa, whom, let me tell you, it is your duty to oblige.'

'O, Sir,' said I, 'I will not dispute with you about a name. If you can prove that you are any way related to me, I shall certainly esteem it an honour. As to the child, I can make no promises, I assure you: I can only say, that I will do my endeavour at least; and, though not from dull duty, I shall, from affection, a much more engaging motive, strive to contribute to the satisfaction of one who is nearer than a brother.'

'You are very good, Madam,' replied he, smiling; 'but as to the honour of being related to me, (in this manner I mean) I must confess that it is but very little. The poor brat, it must be acknowledged, is base-born; and, therefore, you are no more its mother-in-law, than I am your brother-in-law I mean, by the law of the land. By the laws of nature and reason, indeed, you are much more nearly related; for, as this gentleman's wife, you are as much the mother of this child as if it had been born in marriage; for his marriage with my sister would not make the child more his than it is at present, and, consequently, your duty is, in both cases, the same.'

'I am quite of your mind, Sir,' said I: 'but where is this little creature? methinks I long to be acquainted with my new charge.'—'We shall have the young slut here by and by,' replied he; and then added gravely, 'But what is the matter with Lucius? See how thoughtful he looks! Why,

‘ I profess he has all the father in his face—it is written on his forehead. He has one child now, which, three days ago, I dare say he never so much as dreamed of, and, if I guess right, in three months or so, he will have another. Is it not true, Madam? No wonder then, that he has the look of a patriarch. But, I hope, he has not lost his speech?’

‘ No, no, Sir,’ said Lucius, with a smile; ‘ I have been listening very attentively to you, and at the same time admiring the goodness of a lady that derives fresh charms from my guilt and folly.’—‘ Nay, nay,’ cried he, ‘ there is no wonder that you should not find an opportunity to put in a single word, when a talkative old fellow, and a very fine lady, seem resolved to have all the discourse to themselves: when this is the case, you are too wise not to know, that the most complaisant thing the husband can do, is not to interrupt them. But is she so very good? Why then, I suppose, you have not had so much as a curtain-lecture upon this affair!’—‘ Far from it, I assure you,’ replied Lucius. ‘ Then she is a dear, sweet little angel,’ cried the old man; ‘ aye, and a goddess too; and—an—an—I don’t know what to call her; I can’t think of a name half good enough. I could almost find in my heart to ravish a kiss from her for it; only I am afraid, that it will be a little unreasonable, that both should suffer a rape from our family. Let me tell you, Madam, that you are happy in having an opportunity to shew a greatness of mind, that must for ever endear you to a man of sense. But whatever you are in reality, you are not to appear to the world in the character of a step-mother; the infant must be brought up as the child of a deceased friend, relation, or so; or, if Lucius will consent to it, let her be put under the care of his mother and Marilla. This, Madam, will ease you of a considerable part of the care of your office, and, at the same time, you will have an opportunity of seeing her as often as you please.’

Lucius readily approved of this motion; and I as readily agreeing to it, it was resolved that Sophronia, Lucius’s mother, should be informed, by Mr.

Stevens, of the whole affair. This being immediately determined, he resumed, ‘ There are many advantages which will attend your concealing the truth from the world, besides the single consideration of the reputation of the two families. You would, in some sense, be regarded by the world as a step-mother; and though they would, doubtless, be ready to make some allowance, in consideration of the slut’s being base-born; yet the very name itself is generally here, in the country, the cause of discontent, and frequent uneasiness. It is an unthankful office. Every body takes pains to render her suspected by the little brats; they, without thought, are industrious to weaken her authority, by sowing, in their unthinking minds, the seeds of jealousy, distrust, and a spirit of contradiction. And, let her be ever so good, let her have ever such an affection for the children, the slightest correction, the most gentle reproof, is aggravated into the most insupportable tyranny; every old woman in the parish bemoans their hard fate; and, let the urchins be guilty of ever so great a crime, they can’t whimper, but the simple, well-meaning neighbours, cry out—“ Ah, poor souls! if their own mother was alive, they would not be served so.” The children easily imbibe these bad influences, and are inadvertently taught to hate a person who, perhaps, strives to love them; a woman who, from the time of her marriage, filled with a just sense of her duty, may have resolved to do them all the justice in her power, and to treat them with all possible lenity. Her case is very hard: all her endeavours to please are fruitless; a bad construction is put upon her kindest actions; she strives in vain; is unthankful; and, perhaps, repaid with ingratitude. And this, Madam, I have sometimes known to be the case of by far the best woman in the neighbourhood.’

‘ Really, Sir,’ said I, ‘ you give a very shocking account of the uncomfortable state of being a mother-in-law; enough to frighten any woman from the thoughts of marrying a man who has children: but, however, if she has the goodness to persevere in her kindness,

kindness, she must surely win them over at last; their prejudices must vanish; and, if Mr. Prior's remark be true, that—

“Malice vanquish'd, heightens virtue's
“praise,”—

she will then have the satisfaction of a glorious revenge. Having made this noble conquest, she will force them to do justice to her merit, and, in spite of themselves, to give her their love, their esteem, and their gratitude. What are all the submissions in the world to this? To see their cheeks glow with affection, at the same time that they, with an honest blush, own their error; this is not only heaping coals of fire on their heads, but on their hearts too.

“This is very true,” said Lucius, smiling, and giving me a look of approbation; “but few tempers can hold out against ill treatment. Ingratitude may sometimes sour the best minds; it too easily prompts them to make a return in kind: and, when this is the case, both the lady and the children are worthy of pity.”

We now went up stairs, where we found Prudilla in a much weaker condition than when we were here before: but we had hardly taken our seats, when we heard Mr. Stevens talking to a woman at the chamber-door; and having desired her to step down into the pantry to refresh herself, came in with a child in his arms. Lucius and I arose: our eyes were fixed on the infant; which, smiling, held out its little arms to me: but Mr. Stevens, not observing this, carried it to Prudilla; who, giving a deep sigh, and looking upon it with eyes swimming with affection, desired to kiss it: but the child turned away; and, perhaps, frightened at her ghastly appearance, still struggled to come at me; which she immediately did, the moment she was set down at her mamma's knee.

This little incident, trifling as it was, gave me a good deal of pleasure. I sat down; and placing her on my lap, gave her a kiss: she fondled me; and, with an innocent smile, stroked my face for half a minute, saying—“Ah, poor!” then giggled, and hid her pretty hand in my bosom. I could not help being fond of the dear creature. I kissed her several times, without even knowing why I did it: it was giving way to an impulse which I could not resist. I con-

sidered her as a part of my dear Lucius; I endeavoured to trace in her face some of his well-known features. I cast my eyes on him, that I might be able to form a more accurate judgment of the resemblance; when I could not help observing that, with a look of peculiar pleasure, he seemed to watch all my actions, while, at the same time, his countenance was overspread with a softness that methought expressed a paternal affection working in his heart. While I was thus engaged in endeavouring to trace out, and, by the help of fancy, to prove a likeness between the lineaments of a face that was placed before me, and those in miniature placed near my bosom, my glances frequently met his; and the satisfaction and delight that appeared in them, gave an additional applause to that which arose from the indulgence of these fooleries. Lucius, notwithstanding this visible satisfaction, still continued silent, and seemed at a loss how to behave, though so many expressions of my tenderness might well be supposed to authorize him; and I was just going to chide him for it, when Prudilla, with a sigh, cried, in a very peevish and jealous tone, that she thought it very hard that she might not have the pleasure of kissing her own child; that she saw plainly I should spoil it; and that it was an odd way of shewing my kindness, to take her from a person that must be supposed to love her better than I or any body else could do. Lucius coloured, and, giving her a look of indignation, was going to speak, when Mr. Stevens began; for he being let into the important secret, was now suffered to continue in the room. “What do you mean, sister?” said he, in a hasty, severe manner; “would you not have the lady love the child? If you are so jealous that nobody must be fond of her but yourself, e'en take her with you. A good mother would think herself very happy in leaving it to the care of a person who is disposed to be fond of it.” —“A good mother!” returned she, crying: “you are always reproaching me with my guilt; why must I be told of it? why must I be upbraided with being a mother? But yet it is too true—to my shame it is. Would to God I had never been a mother! Would to God I had never deserved to be a mother!” —“See there now,” cried Mr. Stevens; “I protest there is no such thing

‘ thing as speaking to her. I reproach you!—Well, but it’s no matter.’ And then addressing himself to me—‘ Dear Madam,’ said he, ‘ excuse this treatment. My sister’s illness makes her so peevish, that she hardly knows what she says. Be so good as to let me take the child.’

Lucius and I stared; and it was not without some struggles that I stifled my resentment. I was two or three times going to break out, and to interrupt them; and had I followed the first dictates of my passion, so much was I provoked at her manner of speaking, that I should have disowned all my tenderness to the child, though my heart would have given the lie to my words, and have vented much more bitter reproaches than those she received from her brother; and, perhaps, in the heat of my resentment, I might have told her that, to oblige her, I would readily disclaim all relation to it. But a few moments reflection, and the sight of Lucius, made me resolve to speak in a different manner; and Mr. Stevens’s good-natured apology, not to speak at all. Could I, Madam, have said any thing that would have displeased Lucius more? Could I have behaved in a manner more contrary to the settled disposition of my mind? Yet passion would have done what my reason would for ever have disallowed. Mr. Stevens took the child, who clung to me, and, giving me a beseeching look, cried at parting. He stepped with her to his sister; and setting her on one of the arms of the chair, she had just strength enough to keep her from falling. She kissed her two or three times; but had hardly had her a minute, when saying that her crying distracted her head, she desired that somebody would take the naughty girl from her. Lucius seized her in his arms; and, first seeming to observe my looks, hugged her to his bosom, kissed her with the affection of a tender parent, and then brought her to me, and desired her to kiss me, which she readily did. He smiled; and being apprehensive that Prudilla’s ill temper might again shew itself, wished her better, and we both took our leave, Mr. Stevens calling for the nurse to take the child. While we were at dinner, Mr. Stevens renewed his apologies; and at the same time told me, that he had been so provoked at seeing my goodness, as he called it, so ungratefully returned,

that, notwithstanding his sister’s illness, he had much ado to behave towards her with any degree of decency. And on this score, too, Lucius vindicated his silence; alledging, that if he had once begun to reproach her, his heat of temper would, in all probability, have made him treat her in such a manner as might have been attended with very ill consequences with respect to her. I was not, I confess, entirely satisfied with this reason; I was insulted on his account, and had been shocked with reproaches in the midst of a glow of tenderness, and while I was giving a high testimony of my affection to him, and engaged in an employment which my affronted pride made me almost look upon as an act of supererogation. However, I seemed to admit of his excuse; and, as I made no reply, but took pains to curb and conceal the remains of my ill temper, which had now pretty well subsided, he seemed to think me perfectly satisfied with it.

You see, Madam, that I can be out of humour without cause. Lucius was certainly in the right; for how barbarous would it have been in him to have retaliated an affront on a woman on the very verge of life, merely for a weakness and peevish fretfulness, which her illness, added to her uneasy reflections, might well excuse! And had the consequences been what he had just reason to dread, I am sure he would never have forgiven himself.

Our conversation, Madam, for the rest of the day, was so little interesting, that I shall not trouble either you or myself with a repetition of it. And, indeed, I have already given you trifles enough to make you think this a most trifling letter. My mind was, however, in a most delightful situation all the afternoon, and particularly when we took our leave; and the engaging manner in which Lucius made his acknowledgments upon our return home in the coach, strengthened and confirmed every delightful sensation. ‘ My dear Felicia,’ said he, taking hold of my hand, and giving me a look expressive of every thing that can be called tender and generous; ‘ how kind, how obliging, is your whole behaviour! How agreeable is my surprise, to find nothing but the dearest proofs of affection where I expected to meet with reproach; and to see you generously overlook a crime which would raise the indignation of almost every other

other woman! To see you care for a child which is not your own! A child that is—— But I can't find words to express half my meaning. Is all my tenderness too little for you, that you must thus endeavour to encrease it with the most sensible obligations, and to add to love the highest admiration and gratitude?—'How much are you mistaken!' cried I, laughing. 'What will you say, if I tell you that I know many ladies, and, I believe, some of strict virtue too, who have adopted it as a maxim, that "a reformed rake makes the best husband?" This is really a most ridiculous, as well as indecent assertion; and, whenever it is tried, a most dangerous experiment: but as vanity makes them always flatter themselves that their charms are capable of producing this wonderful reformation, they are hardly ever afraid of marrying, even the most abandoned libertine, though sunk a thousand degrees below the dignity of a man. Pray what would these people say to a fault which must appear extremely small when compared to years spent in the diabolical employment of ruining innocence, and in all the cruel infernal arts of falsehood, deceit, and treachery?'—'I am surprized, my dear,' said Lucius, 'that ladies who have adopted such a pernicious opinion, should have so little prudence as to make it publick. Have they no sense of modesty? Can they be insensible that people will be apt to charge them with being influenced by desires that prompt them only to approve a man who has given before-hand convincing testimonies of his ability to gratify them; and that, for a certainty of this, they will sacrifice every other consideration, and prefer him who has proved himself a villain? You know, my dear, it is not such as these I meant. I would not do you the injury to mention your name with theirs, nor am I solicitous about the dislike or approbation of such as these; but that you should thus generously hide my faults, how can I sufficiently thank you! That you, who are modesty itself, a friend to every virtue, should, instead of upbraidings, lavish your tenderness, and, with all the blandishments of love, care for an infant that——' 'Hold, hold, my dear,' cried I, laughing; 'a truce to your flat-

tery, I beseech you. Pray, how long have we been married? Above nine months, I believe. It is high time, sure, to have done with compliments. Why, we ought to have had twice as many quarrels; and, to follow the mode, we should, before this time, have begun heartily to hate each other. But to be serious,' added I, with a gravity much more suitable to the present disposition of my mind than this flight, which, however lively, was all affectation; 'to what purpose should I torture you, by reproaching you with a fault long since passed? Can I give you pain without feeling it myself? Since none of us are perfect, ought I not rather to rejoice that you have so few faults, and so many virtues to counterbalance them? I am very sensible, that should a young woman, with the same temptation, so readily forfeit her honour, she would be entirely inexcusable, and her crime would admit of but little alleviation. I am sensible, too, that though she would suffer the greatest infamy by becoming a mother, your crime, in the eye of Heaven, may be as great as hers; yet the world, that would condemn her, will excuse you. And shall I be more obdurate, and less ready to forgive, than a stranger? I, who have improved by your example, and who owe to you a vast acquisition in knowledge, and in many sublimely delicate sensations? It was you who first taught me to converse with myself, to know the pleasures of reflection, and all the delight that accompanies heavenly gratitude and love. With all these obligations, have I reason to complain that you are a man, and not an angel? Though you have been frail, your mind is still untainted. I have not the least fear of your infidelity to me. It is my duty, it is my interest, to make you happy; and I hope it will always be, as it is now, my highest pleasure. O Lucius! where could I have found a husband like you? for, as Hamlet says of his father, "Take you for all in all, I ne'er shall look upon your like again."

Lucius embraced me; but told me he might, with far greater justice, retort the charge of flattery upon me. He confessed that he had many imperfections, and the most tender and obliging things were said on both sides; but I have now neither the leisure nor inclination to re-

peat them. May every refined delight be yours; and may your ladyship ever be as happy as is, at present, your sincerest friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXVIII.

I Am very glad, Madam, to find that both you and your aunt approve my conduct: but, if you make my letters so publick as to shew them your friends, you will oblige me, in spite of my own inclinations, to write with more reserve. The account of the dispute between her and you, on the propriety of Lucius's reproving a young woman whom he thought a partner in his guilt, is very diverting; but I am more pleased to find that confidence and unreserve with which I have related certain events, and which I was not altogether satisfied with, sufficiently justified by her observations. It is with inexpressible delight I hear her say—That the ingenuity of mind which could prompt him to undertake so irksome a task, and the modest diffidence that accompanied his behaviour to me, so opposite to the bold confidence of a man who would rather glory in his guilt, place him in so fair a view, as to make him, in her opinion, more amiable than if he had wanted this shade to heighten the lights which form the portrait I have given of his character.—

After this compliment to Lucius, would not any one imagine that I was a tolerable painter? She talks of lights and shades mutually setting off each other; and what else is necessary to compleat the picture? How unreasonable is it in her, to insist upon your desiring me to present her with a more finished piece, and to give the portrait of his mind in one view! But you must be obeyed. And yet how difficult is the task! Where shall I begin? He has all those endearing impressions of humanity, those native traces of goodness, which the mind approves upon the first view. His virtue costs him little or no pains, it springs freely from his soul; while the easy sweetness with which it is accompanied, lets every one see that it is attended with all the pleasures of self-gratification: it is the result of a refined taste, a correct imagination, and a settled judgment. From hence his bene-

ficence derives its virtue, as well as its source, and not from a consideration of the pleasure that accompanies it. In short, he has a mind so noble, so disinterestedly and freely virtuous; that a person who would represent virtue at a continual war with ourselves, would scarcely allow him to have any virtue at all. Nay, if there be any foundation for the opinion of those gentlemen who place the perfection of a virtuous action in the opposition it meets with from nature, he is absolutely incapable of performing one, either generous in itself, or acceptable to his God. If this commonly received opinion be true, it will prove that no one, who has not first been a compleat villain, can possibly attain to the sublime character of a good man; that he who fluctuates between the rage of appetite on the one hand, and his duty on the other, is the fairest character upon earth; and that a man of regular desires, a man of strict honour, acting from the most generous motives, is the most unhappy creature living; since his virtues, becoming by practice in a manner constitutional, must lose all their value, and consequently their reward. But let it be considered, that the *strength* of every vicious propensity is only the *weakness* of the opposite virtue; that a reluctance to an act of humanity can only proceed from the hardness of a heart petrified by a criminal selfishness; and that the very suspense between virtue and vice tarnishes the virtue, though it should become victorious. Can that be an imperfection in man which is the glory of all the higher orders of created beings, and even of the great Creator himself? For, as a most ingenious author says—“If compulsion be the essence of virtue, the conduct of even the Supreme Being has much less merit in it than the most disingenuous of his creatures: for, to practise virtue, the highest degrees of virtue, without constraint; to pursue it upon a principle of free choice, for the mere pleasure and approbation of the thing itself, as his glory and his happiness; is what constitutes our idea of the divine perfection: and shall the same thing, which gives such a superlative grace and lustre to the divine character, cast a shade upon the human? So that, after all, constraint and self-denial are so far from being necessary to virtue, that it

is mere *weakness*, and want of virtue, that gives them either use or expediency*.

Thus, Madam, I have been at the pains of embellishing my letter, and setting off my own reflections, with a long quotation, to contradict a favourite opinion of your aunt's, and to prove that my dear Lucius may be a good man without having a violent inclination to be a bad one. There are instances, it is true, in which virtue is attended with some degree of self-denial; and this would, doubtless, have been the case of Lucius, had he had virtue to refuse the proffered favours of the unknown Prudilla: but, however difficult the conquest is at first, a steady adherence removes every obstacle; the temptation arising from future attacks becomes less and less as the mind becomes more perfect; perseverance treads down the briars, and makes the path plain, easy, and delightful; unnumbered beauties open to our view, and the rugged road becomes the lawn of pleasure; the mind is at leisure calmly to contemplate the divine landscape that lies before it, to enjoy the fragrant breeze, to taste the charms of conscious innocence budding with golden fruit; and, above all, with rapture to behold the smiles of Heaven, beaming celestial light and divine complacency.

But whither am I rambling? It is time to trace back my steps, and, like a good wife, to return to my husband; and, as I flatter myself that I have done him justice, I will proceed with his character, which will be best illustrated by his conduct. His usual employment is in giving joy to a number of grateful dependants; and sometimes Marilla and I have the satisfaction of joining with him in little acts of beneficence and compassion. When there are immediate objects of distress before him, how readily does his sensible heart catch their sorrows! how speedily does he anticipate their wishes, and turn their grief into admiration and joy! while his affability and condescension give an irresistible grace to his benefits. But not contented with doing good, when forcibly touched by objects of pity, he endeavours to prevent the least approach of unhappiness and misery, and provides against the poor's

asking for relief, by placing them above the want of it.

With regard to this his principal view, he has laid a plan for making considerable alterations in the garden. To serve the poor, he has already levelled giants* with the ground, demolished enchanted castles, and will shortly, by an arrangement of more natural beauties, utterly banish the *phantastical*; which, like the Chinese paintings, can only please by shewing a kind of resemblance of nature in the most whimsical and natural proportions. The choicest flowers, instead of being deposited in knots, are to be carelessly strewed amongst the short grass; and being mingled with every species that adorn the fields, will, in the most beautiful manner, brocade the velvet carpet; while the tulip, auricula, and carnation, and all those whose rising stalks would render them liable to be broken by the undistinguishing foot or the roller, are to retire to the margin of our walks, and skulking close, to seek protection from the nicely-cut verdant walls and obelisks that are still to retain their form. We are to have, in one part, groves and vistas of evergreens; while, in another, the vine, the honeysuckle, and the ivy, are to entwine the barren trunks, and mingle with the branches, of a row of elms that extend across the extremity of the garden, but which, at every walk, leave an opening to let in a view of the neighbouring country. Thus, in those seasons when the rain or the frost withholds subsistence from the families of our poor tenants, we shall always find them employment till they can return again to their usual labours. By this means our most agreeable accommodations will become of extensive benefit, and our very amusements accompanied with those pleasing sensations which result from a calm, undisturbed benevolence.

The man who has personal merit, may safely depend on being treated by Lucius with the utmost respect, though his circumstances are ever so low; for his poverty, so far from being a reproach, seems, in his opinion, to entitle him to a superior kind of deference. He believes them with an air that shews he is only paying a debt due to humanity; and so cautious is he of giving a shock to

* See Philemon to Hydaspes, the second conversation upon false religion.

† See Letter XXVIII.

his sensibility, that he has the look rather of a person obliged, than of one conferring an obligation. For the relief of distressed merit he denies himself many of the elegancies of life, and particularly those of the table, from which every costly, luxurious superfluity is banished. The meanness of a man's natural abilities never inspires him with contempt; if his heart be good, it is all that he requires. Though he cannot give him the esteem due to a friend, he is, in his opinion, a much more amiable character than the man that wants humanity, though possessed of every other qualification that can entitle him to respect; and indeed, without this, fine sense, the most brilliant wit, the most profound erudition, added to the glare of wealth and high birth, can extort no more from him than a stiff, formal civility. He is, in one word, an enemy to nothing but vice and affectation; but he can ridicule the latter, and yet give the person a share of his esteem. His conversation, indeed, wants that brisk gaiety and sprightliness of fancy, and all the light and airy sallies of imagination, which we comprehend under the term *wit*; and as to repartee, he seldom indulges it. He has but little taste for these sparkling advantages in others; he regards them in too mean a light, and therefore is not sufficiently sensible how much these natural accomplishments give a brilliancy to conversation. When he talks, his strong sense is enlivened by a happy turn, a natural elegance of expression; and his language, like his sentiments, is not only just, but sublime. Yet gravity is not always agreeable, and there are moments when folly becomes pleasing, and we find a delight in being ridiculous: from hence wit derives it's most pleasing charms; for with too much wisdom we are sometimes apt to mope into dulness. But this is a case that rarely happens with him, though sometimes it does with me. His spirits flow with a smooth and even stream; whilst I, having sometimes airy flights, am subject to sink into a dulness which folly and impertinence are best adapted to relieve.

You need not be told, Madam, that this is partly my case at present; the heaviness of my expressions, towards the conclusion of what I have written, sufficiently indicates that of my mind. I have lost myself in drawing a character

every way so dear to me, in describing a man whose soul is the soul of friendship; no wonder then that my spirits flag. But, after all, your ladyship will perhaps think, that my affection carries me too far; and that while I am painting the *husband*, I am only discovering the fondness of the *wife*. I will therefore, in pity to you, as well as myself, finish this pleasing, though difficult subject; and, to secure myself from the double charge of dulness and partiality, leave, at least, half his virtues untold. With my sincerest compliments to your other self, and your very good aunt, I am your ladyship's most obedient

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XXXIX.

DEAR MADAM,

I Can now inform you, that Mr. Stevens has been at Mr. Manly's, where he had an opportunity of an hour or two's conversation with Sophronia and Marilla; when, to their no small surprize, under the seal of secrecy, he unfolded the whole affair relating to the child, and they readily agreed to take the pretty infant into their care. After this he went to my aunt's, where he found her son, who arrived the day before from his travels, and who was just returned from paying a visit to Melfont, and his sister Amelia. As he was just setting out to see us, Mr. Stevens altered his intention of staying there to dinner, and readily agreed to accompany him. Accordingly they arrived, attended by a very smart young gentleman, who had commenced an acquaintance with my cousin while they were abroad, from the single consideration of their being countrymen: they therefore returned together; and as his friends lived in Yorkshire, he made my aunt's in his way home, and, at my cousin's request, consented to stay with him two or three days, to rest and refresh himself on his journey.

Lucius received them all with great respect, though Mr. Stevens was, I believe, the most welcome visitor. The gentleman, who was an absolute stranger to every body present except my cousin, made an agreeable appearance; he had an easy flow of words, and an animated expression; but his conversation was that of a

professed

professed libertine. He swore very fluently, and endeavoured to divert us with a recapitulation of several of his adventures in France and Italy. My cousin had so much less of the gentleman in his behaviour, as he had more affectation; and indeed he had acquired nothing by his travels that I could discover, but a low kind of knowledge, that he had better have been without, a greater stock of vanity and folly, and a knack of impertinently introducing a little French. And that his conversation might want nothing to render it disagreeable, he swore twice as much as his companion: for he had scarcely sat down, when taking a glass of wine, he cried, with a ridiculous, affected grin—
'Sblood, Madam, you see that I have
' lost *rien* by my travels, and so, damme,
' *a votres service*—Ha, ha, ha!—Why
' lookée, that is as much as to say, My
' service to ye.'

We had but once before the honour of entertaining such company; however, as this was the first time of our seeing my cousin after a long absence, and as the other was both his friend and an absolute stranger to us, good manners, or rather the custom of the world, would not suffer us to hazard the giving them an affront, by a reproof, which, however just in itself, would have been taken as a gross insult. Dinner was but just over, when we were agreeably surprized with a visit from a very worthy gentleman, the minister of the parish. But it was some time before we received any relief from his company: and indeed, though reproof was more suitable to his character than ours, I soon found that he also had too much of the same good-breeding to interrupt them. The stranger ran on with his intrigues, referring every minute to my cousin, to whom he always gave the name of his pocket-book, to know either the precise time of an event, or the name of the place where the important trifle was transacted; when the latter, to shew his exact punctuality, and to indulge, perhaps, a kind of vanity in displaying the strength of a memory wholly taken up with trifles, was sure to launch out into twenty particulars foreign to the question. He never forgot the name of the meanest village; and if he was asked what any town was called where they had dined, he not only readily replied, but added of his own accord the sign at the gate

of the inn, what they had for dinner, whether the wine was good or bad, and some little adventure of his own, and this by way of episode; for when he had done, he always put the other in mind to go on again: '*But, damme, Jack!—as you was a saying—allons—allons,*' constantly concluded whatever my wife cousin had to say. Thus they played into each other's hands, while we had nothing else to do but, like humble auditors, to listen to their impertinence.

The tea-table did not procure us any intermission; and finding the clergyman had no intention to interpose, I kept aside into the next room, desiring him to follow me; where I told him, that he would oblige me if he would take upon himself the trouble of giving them a gentle reproof; for I could not bear to hear them swear with such uncontrolled freedom. He promised that he would, and we returned to our chairs. We had hardly sat down, when my cousin gave him a very favourable opportunity; for accidentally spilling a little tea upon his legs, he began to curse, and stamp, and swear, like a madman; but no damage being done, he was presently easy, when the clergyman observed, in a very handsome manner, that he could not help being so unpolite as to think swearing a very poor accomplishment in a gentleman; that it was a vice that wanted even the colour of temptation to excuse it, having neither the allurements of pleasure nor profit. 'The predominance of this profane practice,' added he, 'frequently calls for the most earnest exhortations from the pulpit; and I lately preached a sermon on the subject, which I wish you had the benefit of hearing.'

This reproof gave me a secret satisfaction; and I was going to second what he had said, when the stranger replied—
‘ And pray, doctor, be so good as to tell us what success this performance of yours had? I hope in the Lord you made a pretty many converts, for to be sure nobody could withstand the force of your reasoning.’ The reverend gentleman, I must confess, looked a little silly and disconcerted. My cousin laughed, and jogging Lucius with his elbow, and at the same time winking with one eye, cried, just loud enough to be heard by all the company, ‘ *Du diable!* did you mind him, hay —zooks, twig the parson.’—‘ Well, S 2 ‘ well,

‘well,’ cried Lucius, smiling, ‘I heard the sermon the gentleman mentions; and, I assure you, it was a very good one. I take this opportunity, Sir, to thank you for it; but you must excuse me if I am of a different opinion from you in this particular. Swearing is certainly attended with both pleasure and profit; and was I to preach a sermon, it should be to prove it.’

The stranger appeared quite at a loss, and rubbing his forehead, I heard him mutter to himself—‘I will be damn’d if I can tell what to make of this! Pleasure and Profit! Old Sir Crape is in the right; but what the devil does the gentleman mean? After all it is a cursed foolish custom.’ My cousin, clapping Lucius on the back, seemed mightily delighted, without knowing why. Mr. Stevens was in a deep suspense, and looked at Lucius with extreme attention; while I was perfectly astonished. I had been expecting some grave and judicious remark; and did not doubt but that Lucius would advance something new on the subject, that might, for the present at least, put a stop to their profane impertinence; when I was all at once mortified to find that I had spoke to the reverend gentleman to little purpose, since he was resolved to take their part, and to countenance what I knew his heart must condemn. ‘Fie, fie, Sir!’ cried the clergyman after a little hesitation, and with a tone and look that shewed him equally pleased and dissatisfied, ‘You joke, I am sure you do. Make a sermon in praise of swearing! God forbid! ’tis all a joke.’—‘Indeed,’ said Lucius, ‘I am in earnest. Don’t you think I should make some converts? It is a taking subject; quite new, I believe, Sir.’—‘Phu, phu, Converts! Perverts!’ cried the good gentleman, with some warmth; ‘aye, converts for Satan indeed. Dear Sir, for Heaven’s sake don’t talk in this manner.’ My cousin was now all life; he seized Lucius’s hand, crying—‘Ay, do give us, do, *un sermon sur des sermens*. Ha, ha, ha! You see I am a wit. I’ll be cursed if I don’t listen to you; faith! I will remember every word. Come, begin, commence.’—‘No, no,’ cried Lucius, ‘why in such haste? I am not used to preaching, and therefore, as this will be my first performance, a day or two’s time is little

enough to prepare myself.’ If you will all give me the favour of your company the day after to-morrow, I will oblige you. Meanwhile, I must desire you, and this gentleman, your friend, to consider the matter seriously, and prepare yourselves to anticipate what I shall have to say; by this means you will justify this practice to your own minds, and whenever you are attacked in this manner again, be ready, with my assistance, to vindicate yourselves to the world, as well as your own consciences. I would have every body act from principle; and therefore I must beg you to endeavour to suspend the practice, only till you can recollect some good arguments for it’s vindication: this cannot surely be very long—a quarter of an hour, perhaps, may furnish you with sufficient motives; but if not, I would not have you be discouraged; there can be no great hurt in waiting till you hear my lecture, which, I dare promise you, will furnish the strongest and most convincing reasons for your continuing the laudable practice. But you must permit me, gentlemen,’ added he with a smile, ‘as your advocate and friend, to insist upon one condition, and that is, that I may be allowed to swear the first oath, and give the first curse.’ The stranger immediately gave his consent to this proposition, which he acknowledged to be reasonable enough; while my cousin, with a look of pleasure, precipitately replied, (at the same time giving a stamp with his foot, and rubbing his hands) ‘Damn it; and so you shall, *de tout mon cœur*, br—’ ‘Hold, hold,’ cried Lucius; ‘I appeal to the company, if this be using me well.’

Though we were at a loss to know what he was driving at, we all gave our assent, and I proposed that he should suffer some penalty. The poor youth was self-condemned, and scratching his head, begged pardon, telling us, it was not done with design: but Lucius was inexorable; he pulled out his watch, and proposed, that he should be obliged to be silent for five minutes; and this sentence being approved, he added, to punish him farther, that he himself would not swear till he could find an opportunity of introducing an oath in such a manner as to give a grace to the sentence.

The tea-things had been taken away for some time; Mr. Stevens had lighted his pipe, and the watch was placed on the table before Lucius, which my cousin, during the time of his silence, continued to examine with the closest attention: mean while the clergyman expressed his surprize at Lucius's behaviour, and let us know, that he would not only hear him, but would sit up all night to answer so wicked a sermon; and he did not doubt but he should be able to overturn all his arguments; and therefore invited the company to hear him the succeeding day at church, when he would let them see that a good cause could suffer nothing by being attacked; adding, that as he had truth and religion on his side, he did not doubt but he should be enabled, through divine assistance, to convince, if not to reform, them. Lucius requested that he would hear him before he promised too much; and told him, that he himself, with all his zeal, might approve what he now condemned: however, he desired him to wait with patience, and, if he was not convinced, he would certainly attend to hear his own arguments refuted. But the stranger was averse to the proposal of going to church; and my dumb cousin shewed his dislike to the motion, by signs, till he had liberty to speak; and then he loudly exclaimed against it.

The conversation was now more equally divided, and, at the same time, it was rendered less shocking; for whatever were Lucius's secret intentions, which we were yet unacquainted with, he had already, by siding with them, produced a more happy effect than would probably have attended all his remonstrances. Our two travellers spoke slowly, and with abundance of precaution; and while we were all watching them, my cousin was watching Lucius, frequently interrupting him, to let him know that in such a place he might handsomely introduce an oath; but Lucius had the advantage of constantly proving that it would flatten, or perplex, the sense of the sentence: when waiting about half an hour to no purpose, my cousin, and his friend, perhaps tired of this restraint, took their leave, and in the most obliging manner left us at liberty to indulge the pleasure of a free and unreserved conversation.

The clergyman saw, and confessed the force of Lucius's stratagem; but could

comprehend nothing of the sermon, or his reasons for contradicting an assertion that had all the force of a self-evident truth; and as he was now under less restraint, became very inquisitive, in order to search into the motives of this extraordinary conduct: but all the answer he could obtain from Lucius was, that he was really in earnest, and that he would give him no reason to be dissatisfied with his performance. So that he was obliged to wait, as well as the others, till the time appointed to gratify his curiosity took place.

Lucius had this day acted in a manner quite opposite to his usual conduct; and I now saw that the man who had hitherto behaved with such an artless simplicity of manners, had regulated his general behaviour from principle, and from choice; since we found that he was able, upon occasion, to assume a character opposite to his own: and if this, Madam, contradicts any thing I have said of him in my last letter, pray impute it to my ignorance of his abilities. The rest of the afternoon was spent very agreeably; and Mr. Stevens, before he took his leave, gave me a hint, that he saw plainly that Lucius was only playing upon the two travellers; and added, that he would not lose the opportunity of visiting us on Saturday for any consideration.

The next day, and part of Saturday, Lucius continued locked up in his closet, attended only by young Trueman, who served him as an amanuensis. The company came at the time appointed, together with Mellifont, my aunt; and Amelia, who had received an imperfect account of the affair from her brother; so that Lucius had a tolerable audience. As soon as they were seated, he asked the two friends, whether they had seriously considered the affair, and if they had found out any important advantages attending the use of oaths and curses in conversation. The stranger ingenuously confessed, that he had considered it pretty closely, and that, so far from seeing any advantage in it, he really began to be ashamed of the habit, and declared, that if he was to think much more about it, he should be obliged to leave it off; for the more he thought of it, the more indefensible it appeared. Lucius then desiring that nobody present would take any exceptions to any thing he said, rose up and began; while all present, having their curiosity stretched to the utmost extent,

tent, seemed to listen with extreme eagerness and attention. And, as I imagine that yours is attended with little less impatience, I here send you a copy, which Trueman has just transcribed for your use.

A
S E R M O N

IN

PRAISE OF SWEARING IN CON-
VERSATION.

MATT. VI. 13. The latter part of the verse.

And SHALL swear by his name.

THERE is a set of men in the world, who need only be known in order to be despised; men, who are a constant subject for ridicule, and justly the derision of the gay and more refined part of the human species: men who are so stupid, as to be more enamoured with the pleasure of a benevolent action, more charmed with giving joy to the helpless and miserable, with drying up the tears of the distressed, or soothing the agonies of the bursting heart, than with the lordly pride of wanton power, than in rendering the wretched more wretched, than with spurning at patient merit, or even the satisfaction of racking tenants, hoarding wealth, or all the high gratification of a debauch; more delighted with the visionary pleasure of indulging their own reflections, and the applause of a good conscience, than with the charms of a bottle, the transports afforded by the lascivious wanton, or all the high-wrought indulgences of a luxurious appetite. And, in one word, to sum up their character, more afraid of a false, or even an unnecessary oath, than of the point of a sword.

It is with these poor, mean-spirited wretches, that I am now to combat, in order to shew the great advantages that attend a strict compliance with the injunction in my text, *And thou shalt swear by his name.* I shall not here take up your time in examining the context, or even in considering what is meant by the command in my text, which some would confine to the necessary oaths taken in a court of judicature; but, like all sound divines,

and in compliance with the custom of all good commentators and disputants, consider the passage before us in that latitude which is most adapted to answer my particular design.

One man takes his text, and endeavours, with the most elaborate eloquence, to prove that the Bible he preaches from is a work not fit to be read; that it never was designed for the instruction of such blockheads as his audience, who, by looking into it, incur damnation. What concerns all to know, must be read by none but the priest, or whom he shall appoint. How glorious that revelation, which, in the hands of the multitude, points the way to misery; but, in those of the church, to eternal life! It is she alone who can infallibly inform us, that love, and charity, and compassion, and tenderness, so often mentioned in that old book the Bible, mean spite, and hatred, and inquisition, and burning faggots.

Another, with pious snuffle, and all the moving force of sighs and groans, proves that the God of truth is the God of falsehood; and finds his scheme contradicted by the language of Scripture, for Scripture nicely distinguishes between a revealed and a secret will, both opposite, both contradictory to each other. Scripture he proves to be a lye; his opinion he proves to be true from Scripture. He wisely turns out common sense, to make room for grace. He degrades reason as being in league with the devil, and, in the pious ardour of his heart, saves himself the trouble of thinking, and cries out—*I believe, because it is impossible.* Ye deists, rejoice in these your friends! Admit them into your societies! They, like you, can darken truth; they have assisted you in setting fragment against fragment; and, when the dazzling sun-beams shine too bright, can wisely shut their eyes. Let me too be permitted to rank myself on this side, and, countenanced by such great authorities, to take a text that suits my present purpose, regardless of every other passage that may be supposed to contradict it; nay, regardless of the text itself, any farther than as it may serve for a plausible introduction to what I have to offer.

It is sufficient, therefore, that we have here a command to swear by the name

name of God; which I shall take, in the common and vulgar sense of the word Swearing, to mean, not only all manner of oaths, but whatever goes under the denomination of swearing in conversation, as oaths, curses, and imprecations.

In treating this subject, I shall consider—

I. The many advantages attending the frequent use of oaths, curses, and imprecations: in which will be sufficiently proved, the falseness of that assertion, that swearing is attended with neither pleasure nor profit.

II. Answer some objections. And,

III. Make a suitable application.

I. I am to consider the many advantages arising from a frequent use of oaths, curses, and imprecations. In the *first* place, this genteel accomplishment is a wonderful help to discourse; as it supplies the want of good sense, learning, and eloquence. The illiterate and stupid, by the help of oaths, become orators; and he, whose wretched intellects would not permit him to utter a coherent sentence, by this easy practice, excites the laughter, and fixes the attention, of a brilliant and joyous circle. He begins a story, he is lost in a vacuity of thought, and would instantly, to his eternal dishonour, become silent, did not a series of oaths and imprecations give him time to gather up, or rather seek the thread of his discourse: he begins again, again he is lost; but having complimented his friends, by calling for eternal damnation on them all, he has thought what to say next, and finds himself able to proceed with a sentence or two more. Thus he still stalks on, while thought follows slowly after. Blessed expedient! by the use of which, polite conversation glides on uninterrupted, while sound is happily substituted in the place of sense: by this, mankind communicate familiar noises to each other, with as little intellectual ability and labour as a pack of well-matched hounds, so often the object of their delight and admiration! O how preposterously absurd, then, how false, and contrary to experience, is that ridiculous assertion, that swearing is attended with neither pleasure nor profit! For what higher pleasure, what greater profit and advantage can a man enjoy,

than to find, that, *in spite of nature, who has directed him to be silent*, he can hear himself talk—talk without stammering, or drawing out each heavy sentence, that lags behind, to wait on thought! Ye ideots, rejoice! Ye coxcombs, whose costive brain ne'er dictated the flowing sentiment, be glad! Ye, whom learning never fired, in stupid ignorance lost, exult! Blest with ease and indolence, you talk, and those, like you, admire; while listening demons clap their wings, and grin applause!

Forgive me, Sirs, if, fired with my subject, I lose my usual moderation; for who can help being warmed at the motion of such glorious advantages as these? advantages, which level the conversation of the mighty, and raise the oratory of the carman and porter! Here the lowest frequently excel; the plowman, with clouted shoon, outvies his competitors, and practises the vices of the gentleman, with more success than the lord of the manor, or the splendid courtier, though adorned with star and garter. Here no abilities, no learning, are necessary; no studious hours are required to attain perfection. Tropes and figures, all the flowers of oratory, all the pedantry of the schools, are vain and useless trumpery, compared to these ornaments: they require pains and study; nor can be applied without judgment, and the toil of reading what are foolishly called the ingenious and polite authors: but swearing is, as I have said, learning to the ignorant, eloquence to the blockhead, vivacity to the stupid, and wit to the coxcomb.

Secondly, Oaths and curses are a proof of a most heroick courage, at least in appearance, which answers the same end. For who can doubt the valour, the intrepidity, of him who braves the thunder of Heaven, who affronts the most formidable Being in the universe, and treats with contempt that all-enlivening principle which sustains and animates the whole creation? To what a noble elation is the heart of the coward conscious, when he thus defies the Almighty, and imprecates the fires of hell! Let the blustering bully domineer, let him roar out his curses, and threaten all who dare provoke the vengeance of his potent arm; let him terrify by

a surly

a surly frown, and intimidate, when with portly gait he vents ten thousand oaths and curses on the wretch who impudently presumes to oppose his mighty will—who dares doubt his courage? Who can believe, that the cane, or the toe, when duly applied, have such magick power, as to make him twist and writhe himself like a serpent, till, with this exercise, his joints and his mind become so supple, that he can bend and cringe, and ask pardon? Let the meek soldier boast his deeds of war, and with oaths and execrations lace the self-flattering tale; who can believe that so great a hero should have an antipathy to the sight of steel? or that he, who challenges the blasting lightning to fall on his head, would tremble and turn pale at the flash of a pistol? No, this must never be imagined; for can it be supposed that he has less bravery in the field than in the tavern! With these blustering expletives, then, the coward may strut and look big, and every minute give fresh proofs of an invincible courage: he may bravely sport with that Being, whose frown would make the heavens and earth to tremble; he may seem to snatch the vengeance from his uplifted hand, and throw it on his foe; he may invoke the wrath of Heaven; and who can imagine that he is afraid of death, when he is continually calling for all the horrors of hell?

Thirdly, He hereby not only gives a proof of his courage, but informs the world, that he is intirely divested of all the foolish prejudices of education, and has unlearned

“All that the nurse, and all the priest
 “have taught:”

that he has not only shook off the shackles of enthusiasm, but has banished from his mind that reverence of the Deity, which is the foundation of every system of religion. He is not suspected of being such a fool as to want instruction, since it cannot be imagined that he has so dull a taste as to go to church, unless, if he be a gentleman, to ogle the ladies; if a clown, to sleep; or, if a tradesman, in complaisance to the sober old women of both sexes, who happen to be his customers: and he has this additional ad-

vantage, that he will never be taken for a pious churchman, a presbyterian, a quaker, or a methodist. And, in reality, he is so far from being a bigot to any religious principles, that he belongs to no religious society upon earth. That he is not, nor can be a christian, is evident; for what is christianity? It is extensive benevolence, humanity, and virtue, to which he bids defiance with every curse. He cannot be a deist, because they openly profess the utmost reverence for the Deity; and, for the same reason, he can neither be a Jew, or a Mahometan, or a follower of Confucius. No, nor even an atheist; since we cannot conceive, that he would so often call upon God, if he was thoroughly convinced there was no such Being in the universe: however, he every minute lets us see, that he does not fear him. How unlicensed is his freedom! how glorious and unconstrained! Let the wretches, who meanly bend their wills, and regulate their actions, by the sage dictates of reason and conscience; who stoop to follow the rules of religion, and call them sacred; let these bridle their tongues, let these confine themselves within the narrow limits prescribed by reason and good sense; the swearer knows better; sense, and reason, and religion, are all subservient to his will; he disdains their fetters, and rules those which rule all the world beside.

Fourthly, and lastly, Another advantage which attends the vice of the gentleman, this noble accomplishment, is, that it sometimes raises him to dignity and honour. Under this head, indeed, I take a greater latitude, and advert to a remote consequence of the practice of swearing: but as there is such a close concatenation in all our habits, and virtue and vice are progressive in their very nature, I should not do complete justice to my subject, if I omitted the consideration of it in this particular view. When a man, therefore, by a happy association of ideas, joins to the other advantages of this vice ideas of wealth and grandeur; when he sees no argument that appears of any weight to bind him down to the unthrifty rules of honesty; and his regard for his own private advantage is too strong to let him have any for the private property of his neighbour;

' neighbour; what should hinder him, when a fair opportunity offers, from raising himself, by the ruin of his neighbour, his companion, or his dearest friend? He has sworn to a thousand lyes in company, without any view of private advantage; what should prevent him, then, from taking one false oath, when the advantage is so considerable? Surely, neither conscience, nor reason, nor religion, can do this: no, that is impossible; for I, who am as infallible as any dignified priest that ever mounted a pulpit, have asserted, that these are all subservient to his will.

' Here the swearer, with an unbounded ambition, aspires to seize on wealth, and boldly to grasp at those riches which fortune has foolishly given to a more deserving person; and this in spite of Justice and Equity, who are his professed enemies. Thus he rises above the multitude, and gains a lasting fame; not by blood and slaughter, but by cunning, deceit and artifice; by bursting through the most solemn engagements, breaking in sunder the bonds of society, and only violating what all honest men hold sacred. Suppose that he fails in his attempt, and the property of the person he has attacked remains inviolate: he is conveyed to a castle, strong as that of a crowned head; where no impertinent intruders dare appear to disturb his repose: for in the day-time he has a porter to stand at his gate; in the night, his faithful attendants lock and bar his doors.

' Surrounded with guards, he pays a solemn visit at the seat of Justice; he has the honour of being admitted to the royal bench; he converses with that sovereign personage herself, and, for a considerable time, takes up the whole attention of her prime ministers, the lords of her court, who, assiduous to pay him all due respect, wait his coming in their proper habiliments; and though it be ever so early in the day, he is never received with the disrespectful negligence of an undress. The ceremony being over, he is re-conducted by the same guards who brought him thither, and who dare not presume to leave him till he is safe within his palace. He now soon receives the reward of his baffled dexterity, the glorious fruit of his ambition. The day arrives, devoted to

' mirth and jollity, business and care are laid aside, and every labouring hand has now a holy-day. He walks, or rides in his triumphal car, attended by a numerous throng of gazing spectators: he is mounted above their heads, and his neck, not his temples, adorned with a civick wreath, and his wrists with an embrazure, composed of a matter something coarser, indeed, than that of pearls and diamonds. This is no sooner done, than gaping thousands send forth shouts of joy, and bending low, even to the ground, pay him homage; then rising up, with loud acclamations, present their tribute, striving who most shall pay, who ofteneft bend. He is covered, he is loaded, with their gifts, and sensibly touched with their bounty. The more he gains, the more unenvied here he stands; while all rejoice, and give the applause that is his due. But, let his modesty be ever so great, let his blushes be like the trickling drops of crimson, painting his bashful cheek, and prompting a willingness to retire from these honours; yet one hour at least he is restrained to stay, to receive the willing offerings of the multitude. Thrice happy man! had conscience, or had reason swayed, thou never hadst thus been blest; unknown thou mightest have lived, unknown have died.

' II. I come now, in the second place, to answer some objections; but as these, after what has been said, must appear extremely trifling, I shall be as concise as possible, and hasten to a conclusion. It is said,

' In the *first* place, that the swearer acts in direct opposition to all the rules of right reason.

' But how can this be called an objection against swearing? What have we to do with right reason?—We leave it to the dull wretches, the men of reflection: and yet there are some of these who attempt to mimic us: but if they act inconsistently with their own abilities, let them look to that. An upright man is a downright fool, if he swears at all. Let those who can talk without it, extol their wonderful talents; they have no need of this polite vice to recommend them to the world. The squeamish wretch who is afraid of a lye, has no need to swear to what he says, for he is certain that his word will

be readily taken. But away with these yea and nay wretches, men born to be pointed at; the sheepish, the sober fools, who, regardless of the boundless liberty we enjoy, talk of rectitude of manners, religion, and conscience.

Secondly, and lastly, it is objected, that it is one of the most senseless, unnatural, rude, and unmannerly vices, that ever was invented.

This, it must be confessed, is paying a fine compliment to at least half the polite world. How can that be rude and unmannerly which gives such a grace to conversation? 'Tis true, we express ourselves strongly, and use none of those languid, sneaking, epithets in our discourse, which your modest men, your men of humanity, make use of; but, as we talk without meaning, nobody can say that we mean ill. And, indeed, it is a very injurious expression to say that this is *unnatural*, when so many of us have the honour of being universally deemed to be little better than *naturals*.

And now, Sirs, I have proved so effectually the great advantages attending the practice of this genteel and fashionable vice, that there needs but one word by way of application.

Consider, O consider, how inestimable are the advantages I have mentioned! If there is any one here desirous of obtaining these, and yet is troubled and intimidated with the impertinence of a restless conscience, flying in his face, and threatening to haunt him like a ghost, let him but follow my advice, and conscience will fall asleep. Would he steel his heart against compunction, let him advance by degrees. If he is afraid of an oath, let him come as near it as he can; let him cry, *Egad, ramination*, and *o dram ye*; let him thus chip and carve a few common-place expressions; to fit them them to his conscience, and the business will be done. This practice will render familiar; and the coward, who first trembled at the thought of hell, will soon have the courage to call for damnation.

And now, ye who have long indulged this vice, who have arrived at perfection in this great accomplishment, and, by this means, have gained that applause which nature would have denied you, which reason refused, and conscience condemned; you, I say,

who, by the assistance of this vice, have distinguished yourselves, either as the orator, the pimp, or the bully; you who, with more distinguished glory, have graced the lofty pillory; and you who, under specious oaths of speedy marriage, have violated virgin innocence, and rewarded the maid that loved you with eternal infamy; consider these noble advantages, applaud, congratulate yourselves, and rejoice! You have not stopped at the most flagrant impieties; you have challenged and defied the blasting power of Heaven to do it's worst; and, with a disinterestedness peculiar to yourselves, have generously sold the reversion of eternal, inexhaustible happiness, merely for the pleasure of affronting that great beneficent Being who has prepared it for you, your indulgent Creator and Almighty Friend! How nobly ungrateful! how unselfish your conduct! Boast your bravery, and consider the wisdom of the exchange: for how blind must you be to every self-interested view, how deaf to the calls of self-love, while infinite unbounded felicity has no charms, when standing in competition with the delight of affronting a benefactor, with the pleasure of a curse, and the satisfaction of hearing your own impertinence! STUPIDITY, IGNORANCE, and FOLLY, are on your side: act, therefore, like men who profess to be their friends, and like the true enemies of REASON, RELIGION, VIRTUE, and COMMON SENSE. You have seen your practice justified with advantages which you have never before thought of; if these have any weight, if these have any charms, let them have all their influence. To sum up all, let every man act consistently with his real character; and, by his indulgence of this practice, or his forbearance, let his abilities, or his follies, stand confessed.

You have now, I suppose, read this extraordinary performance: but the striking action, the natural expression varied into different tones, the sneering air in which he uttered some sentences, and the thundering pompous manner in which he pronounced those bordering on the bombast, you can form no idea of; these are still behind, and not to be expressed, even though I should endeavour to follow

low the example of that memorable preacher, who inserted in the margin of his printed sermon the proper places where to cough, and where to blow his nose. Lucius had carefully studied these particulars; which, however trifling they may appear, are essential parts of oratory. These surpassed all description; they gave life and energy to the discourse: every sentence was animated with a degree of fire peculiar to itself, which at once warmed our minds and spread abroad the light of conviction.

Lucius had no sooner concluded this long harangue, than the stranger appeared most forward to thank him; and not only acknowledged the satire just, but very honestly confessed that he felt the force of every word, that he was shocked at a practice he had too much indulged, and resolved never more to be guilty of it. My cousin said, he believed Lucius was run mad, and that he could not understand half of it. The clergyman, though he liked it very well in the main, thought it bordered a little on the profane: but Mr. Stevens was very warm in it's defence; as was my aunt, Mellifont, and Amelia; though the latter objected to the puns and play upon the words; which Lucius vindicated, as agreeable to the ridiculous character he was sometimes obliged to assume, and as most likely to strike the attention of those persons he had in view, who are commonly pleased with mere sounds, and but little influenced by arguments that require reflection.

I am so used to write long letters to you, that I hardly know how to send you a short one. It is a week since I began this; it is therefore time to conclude, and to assure you, that I am, very sincerely, your ladyship's constant friend,

FELICIA-MANLY.

LETTER XL.

DEAR MADAM,

WHEN I concluded my last, I had several things to add, which I think worthy of notice; and therefore, without any farther preface, I shall continue the subject.

The person whom I have hitherto distinguished by the name of my cousin's fellow-traveller, and whose real name is Smith, now expressed an extraordinary esteem for Lucius, which did not seem

to fall very short of the most cordial friendship. His confidence and assurance, which was before the source of great impertinence, was, at this time, (permit, Madam, the expression) melted down by a kind of deference and shame, arising from a sense of folly, and a consciousness of superior worth, into a modest manly diffidence, which served to check the first impulses to an idle gaiety, and cured him, at least in our company, of that forward, talkative temper, which had before rendered his conversation very disgusting. His ingenuity in confessing his crime prepossessed us in his favour; and we soon found him a sensible companion, in spite of that thoughtfulness that now threw a cloud over his natural vivacity; a thoughtfulness that seemed to derive it's source from a sense of inward guilt, and the secret reproaches of his own mind. My aunt made him a very handsome compliment on that open frankness of heart which had made him dare to confess that he had been in an error; but she could not do this without a sigh, and giving an affectionate look at her son. Lucius let us know that she had spoke his sentiments, and he was now regarded as a person worthy of being admitted to a nearer and more intimate acquaintance. Mr. Smith, though very much taken up with his own thoughts, seemed extremely assiduous to please, and to render himself agreeable to every person in the company, but more especially so to Lucius. He observed the respect, the friendship, the sweet complacency, that subsisted between Mellifont, Mr. Stevens, and us; he instantly regarded these two gentlemen as his friends, and addressed them in a manner very different to his former behaviour. He observed the regard we expressed for the worthy clergyman; he now, therefore, treated him with respect. My cousin seemed to have lost his friend; and having nobody to strike out his feeble spark of fire, and to give him an opportunity to display his talents; sat silent, with a most forlorn and disconsolate countenance, his eyes fixed on Mr. Smith, and a visible uneasiness at seeing him engrossed so much of the conversation, and in such a manner, too, as rendered it impossible for him to have any share in it. He was, therefore, out of his element: he was jealous of the superior respect shewn to his friend; he was confounded, disappointed in all his high-raised hopes of future pleasure,

and yet knew not how to complain. In short, he appeared like the figure of moping Melancholy, seated on a tomb. What a surprizing metamorphosis!

The rest of the day was spent with great satisfaction; for though the subjects of discourse were extremely grave, yet our minds partook of that sober, solemn kind of entertainment, which, while we enjoy it, is attended with more delight than the frolick laugh of mirth, and which has the power of accompanying, with a serene satisfaction, the most distant reflections: and indeed, so exquisitely sweet were these calmly-pleasing and self-approving sensations, and so intent were they all on the subjects of conversation, that they did not depart till late in the evening, and even then it was with a visible reluctance.

They had all prepared to go, when Mr. Smith, taking Lucius and me aside, said, with an affectionate tone of voice—
 ‘I hope you will both forgive my impertinent behaviour at my first visit; and I am the more solicitous about this, as I have the ambition of being ranked among the number of your friends.
 ‘Can you, Sir, can you, Madam, excuse my folly? I am thoroughly sensible of it in every particular, and am as heartily ashamed of it; I with your cousin was so too. As for me, I am going to lament in private. My boasted travels, the subject of my former vanity, have been the source of a thousand extravagancies; instead of improving, they have only served to debauch my mind: but these are no sooner finished, than I meet with a person who sets them before me in the truest light.
 ‘The contrast between you and me has been too glaring not to be observed.
 ‘What a wretch do I think myself!
 ‘But I must no sooner know than leave you. I leave you with reluctance, and it is very probable that I shall never see you again.’ Lucius replied, by giving him the most frank and engaging assurances of his friendship; and two days after he set forward on his journey. But it is time to return to ourselves.

Prudilla, Madam, has now breathed her last; but, notwithstanding her former terror and agitation of mind, her last minutes were perfectly composed; and, as nature was quite spent, she left the world without those struggles, and convulsive agonies, which render that awful

moment so terrible with persons of stronger spirits.

We have been several times to my father’s to see the child, and both my mother and my sister Marilla seem perfectly fond of it. It is really an engaging little creature, and I think it impossible for me to help loving it. My duty, in this case, is extremely easy, since it is attended with all the pleasure of following my own inclinations, joined to the additional satisfaction it gives to Lucius.

An affair has happened which gives me great uneasiness, the particulars of which I shall acquaint you with in my next. I am your ever affectionate

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLI.

DEAR MADAM,

I Am now to relate to you the cause of that uneasiness I mentioned in my last; for as you have hitherto been the confident of all my little affairs, I have contracted such a habit of laying my thoughts before you, that I really believe I should find no small difficulty in concealing from you any circumstance in which I have an immediate concern. How great is the force of custom! No sooner does any thing the least extraordinary happen, but I consider it as contributing to your amusement; and frequently sit down to acquaint you with my affairs, even before I have sufficiently reflected whether they are of importance enough to deserve your notice; so that whether you are diverted with my story, or disgusted with my impertinence, depends entirely upon chance.

Some time ago, I took a servant on the recommendation of a poor, though honest, old woman in the neighbourhood; but I needed not the character she gave me to prepossess me in her favour. The innocent and artless modesty of her looks, and the easy unconstrained freedom of her behaviour, were the first things that I took notice of, and which really inspired me with a favourable opinion of her virtue and discretion: but this opinion was soon heightened by the sweetness of her temper, and a certain languor in her looks. I hardly ever found her alone, but I observed her in tears; from hence I began to pity her; and,

and, by degrees, this pity arose to a kind of friendship. I therefore made her service as easy to her as possible; and from being at first my chamber-maid, raised her to be my woman. As her constitution was very delicate, this was a station that I thought she had the greatest reason to be satisfied with; but though she expressed the highest sense of gratitude, yet I could discover no alteration in her disposition. Being still desirous to contribute to her satisfaction, I endeavoured, by all the ways I could think of, to discover the cause of her uneasiness; but she evaded all my enquiries with so much politeness and good sense, that I resolved, at length, to put a stop to my curiosity, till time should wear off her reserve, or some accident, without her consent, inform me of her affairs.

Your ladyship is, perhaps, offended at my offering to entertain you with the trifling affairs of my servants, in which you are ready to imagine there can be nothing of importance enough to engage my concern: but have patience; I don't doubt but I shall soon obtain your approbation with regard to this particular.

I had been called away in the middle of my last letter to you, and was returning to my chamber to finish it; when recollecting that I should want to use a stick of sealing-wax, which I had the day before given to my favourite Dorothea, who, at her own request, was gone to Nottingham, I stepped into her room to look for it. But how great was my surprize, when I beheld upon her table a gold snuff-box finely chased! What could I think! I called Lucius; he came; and, at first, suggested every argument he could think of to remove my suspicions: but comparing the possession of so valuable a box with Dorothea's circumstances, and the manner in which she was recommended to me, he was induced to confirm the opinion I had conceived of her dishonesty. We both concluded that I had caressed an artful, abandoned wretch; upon which a number of circumstances presently rose in our minds that strengthened this heavy charge. Her box was instantly broke open; when, among other things, we found a crucifix set with diamonds, and a chaplet of pearls, and a mass-book in Latin and English. Lucius was enraged, and insisted that she ought to suffer the penalty of the law; and that he could neither excuse it to himself, nor to

his country, to screen her from justice; since, in that case, he should be answerable for the next robbery she committed. We both blessed the discovery we had made; and did not at all question but she waited for an opportunity to let in a gang of thieves, in the night, to rob, and, perhaps, murder us in our sleep; and what confirmed this suspicion was, our presently hearing from the servants, that she had several times been seen to give silver to some shabby, ill-looking fellows, who, under pretence of begging, frequently came to the door. Thus prejudice, Madam, when once raised, is a medium that changes the colour of objects, and shapes them to our fancy. Our fears being awaked, imagination is set to work to invent new scenes of ideal horror. We then deal in nothing but the gloomy and the dismal; we start at the roivings of our disordered minds; new dangers arise at every thought; we catch at every cause of discontent; and, anxious to swell the inward perturbation, search only for fresh grounds of uneasiness. No wonder that the object, that raises these horrid sensations, grows every moment more deformed. While we view only the shades of the direful character, we conclude the whole to be dark and odious; virtue becomes affectation, beauty a mask, and every perfection hypocrisy, put on only to conceal some deadly purpose. Thus, by a kind of contrast, deformity itself becomes more deformed. From hence we precipitately concluded, that, as we had reason to believe her a thief, she was a murderer too, and regarded ourselves as victims to be sacrificed to her avarice. How frightful the thought! Old Mr. Trueman was called to give us his opinion; when he advised us to send to the next justice for a warrant, to procure a constable, and to search the poor woman's house who had recommended her.

The warrant was soon procured; when Lucius and I, with the good old man, attended the constable, to see if we could find any thing there belonging to us. The old woman was terrified to the last degree. She was surrounded with many conveniences, which, a short time before, she was known to want; and seemed raised, in some degree, to a comfortable independence. From whence could this arise, but from her being a necessary instrument in Dorothea's crimes? This was the inference we drew from it. Mr.

Trueman

Trueman therefore secured her, and let her know that she must not leave the house: but she appeared more concerned for her friend than herself; she would not hear of her being a thief; she ran on in her praises. At last, a tea-chest was found, and she readily acknowledged it was Dorothea's, and that she had the key. It was therefore broke open; when we found in it upwards of fifty guineas, some broad pieces, several very fine rings, and a gold watch wrapped up in cotton to prevent it's being damaged. But what struck me most, was a pair of diamond ear-rings: these I was persuaded I knew again; I was convinced that they were the same which my father gave me to keep in remembrance of my dear mamma, and which he had presented to her before their marriage. What could I say? I would not have lost them for ten times their real value. Had I not reason to be enraged? To rob me of what she knew I deemed invaluable, of what I prized on my dear mother's account; me, who had given her my esteem and my friendship; me, who had raised her from nothing, who had caressed her, who had loaded her with obligations, and advanced her almost to the character of my companion: how ungrateful! And yet this robbery was, in all probability, only a prelude to the mischief she was to bring upon us.

These, Madam, were my reflections, and thus I vented aloud my resentment; while the poor woman, terrified almost to death, cried, and, with many sighs and tears, lamented the ruin of a girl who had been so kind a benefactress; intermixing loud and violent protestations of her own innocence.

After the search was finished, the constable was ordered to keep the woman a prisoner, in her own house, till Dorothea's return; when he was to take them together before the magistrate who had granted the warrant. Mean while we went home; and I, with a sorrowful, aching heart, retired with Lucius to talk over the affair, and to wait the return of Dorothea. Almost every servant in the house shewed their envy, by putting the most invidious construction upon her actions; and, had I been disposed to listen to them, I verily believe they would never have ceased their invectives. All

the mischief that had been done in the house would have been, by some one or other, laid at her door; and she was, indeed, charged with faults of which I knew her entirely innocent.

We had waited about an hour for her return; when my chambermaid told me that she was come home, that they had charged her with the fact, and that her very look condemned her. Lucius gave immediate orders to have her taken to the poor woman's, and that the constable should carry them both before the justice; adding, that he would follow them immediately. This news was no sooner carried down, than we heard an extraordinary bustle; and, upon ringing the bell to know what was the matter, a servant came to inform us that she had the impudence to dispute their master's command, and refused to go till she had seen me. I then gave orders that she should be brought up. But I had hardly spoke the word, when she burst open the door, and ran into the room, attended by the cook-maid, and another or two of the lower servants, who stopped at the door. She came up to me as if for protection, and stood trembling, pale, and out of breath: in short, she had lost her cap; her hair was in the utmost disorder, and her cloaths almost torn from her back. What an affecting sight! Lucius seemed shocked, and demanded what was the reason of their treating her in this manner, with a tone of voice that sufficiently expressed his disapprobation. They laid the fault on her, who would not let them take her away civilly; when Lucius observing that they had no right to use violence without his leave, and ordered them sternly to withdraw, our thoughts were turned upon the single object, that with a look of terror stood panting before us. Indeed, Madam, my heart relented. Struck with a figure so moving, I could scarcely refrain from tears; but the next moment, recollecting that she was a thief, a vile hypocrite, who had abused my good nature, indignation again usurped the place of pity.

After a short silence, Lucius, with a stern voice began—'Thou wicked, unhappy wretch,' said he, 'don't attempt to excuse and palliate your crimes; but, by an open confession, discover whom you have robbed, what were your intentions, and who are your accomplices.'

‘complices. This, I assure you, will be the only way to obtain mercy; for, upon these considerations, I now promise to make use of all my influence in your favour.’—‘O Sir! O Madam!’ cried she, interrupting him with an assured air, ‘for God’s sake, hear me! You know not who I am. If I do not convince you that I am injured, extremely injured, let me suffer all that the law can inflict. Let me tell you, Sir, that I neither ask nor desire mercy. The innocent have no need of mercy.’—‘Take care, take care of what you say,’ replied Lucius. ‘I would give a great deal to find you innocent; but such strong circumstances—’ ‘I wish, with all my heart,’ said I, ‘that you could prove your innocence; but I am afraid that is impossible. Such convincing proofs!’—‘And my ear-rings, too!’—‘What ear-rings, Madam?’ returned she, without a blush: ‘you will not, surely, say that I have stole your ear-rings?’—‘Yes,’ said Lucius; ‘they were found in a tea-chest that belongs to you, and I have them here to produce before the magistrate.’

It was observable, that the terror which at first had all the symptoms of guilt, wore off every moment; and, indeed, fear and affright impress upon the countenance of the most innocent marks which may be easily mistaken for indications of the conscious wickedness of an abandoned mind. How absurd, then, is it for people to pretend to form a judgment from such equivocal appearances! She now very calmly desired to see the ear-rings. Lucius took them out of a piece of paper, and gave them into her hand; when, instead of the confusion which I expected to find in her countenance, she replied—‘So I find I am condemned for stealing what is my own.’—‘Yours!’ said I, amazed; ‘you will not, surely, say that these ear-rings are yours! How could you come by them? Besides, I dare say they are mine: why, girl, I could swear it.’—‘Hold, hold, Madam,’ said she. ‘Are yours lost, then? Are they not in your dressing-box?’—‘I have not so much as looked,’ I replied; ‘however, to convince you, I will look now, though I am persuaded it will be to no purpose: I know them too well to be mistaken.’ Here I went for my dressing-box; and bringing it, with much

difficulty, under my arm, opened it before her; when, to my entire confusion, the first thing I set my eyes on was the very ear-rings I had laid to her charge. I blushed; and was so struck with the sight, that I had not the power to speak a word. Lucius, therefore, resumed. ‘Well, Dorothea,’ said he, ‘your innocence, in this particular, is sufficiently recommended; how glad should we be, if it was possible for you to clear yourself of the rest! But how you could come by them, I cannot imagine; I am afraid not honestly. I should rejoice to find that we have injured you; and would, in that case, make you all possible satisfaction. But first put yourself in a little order—your cap, Dorothea—your cap. But, admitting you innocent, which I must tell you I much doubt of, a glass of wine may be necessary to raise your spirits.’ She now looked in the glass, and blushing, began in a hurry to brook and tie up her long dishevelled locks with all the eager concern of a mind that had no other object in view but a regard for decency; telling me, at the same time, that the consciousness that she could clear herself whenever she pleased, was a better support to her spirits than all the wine in the world. Her cap, which, being fastened to her hair, hung low down her back, was presently put on; and, by the confusion in her looks, and the readiness with which she dressed her head, pinned up the rents in her gown, and reduced herself into a more becoming figure, let us see that nothing but such an extraordinary perturbation of mind as that she was in when she ran into the room, could have made her so long inattentive to the decorums of her sex. When she had finished this task, she began—

‘I am now to appear in a very different character from that in which you have hitherto known me. I am obliged to throw off the disguise of a servant, and to reveal a secret which I would gladly have kept within my own breast, at least for some time longer. Your suspicions, I perceive, arise from your finding a few things of value in the possession of a servant; one whom you took into your house under the appearance of indigence and low birth. In order, then, to be restored to your favour, I have nothing more to do but to convince you that I am born of a very

very honourable family, and that I may reasonably expect a fortune sufficient to entitle me to wear these objects of your suspicion. My father, who is now living, is a baronet, and enjoys a very plentiful estate in Lincolnshire; he was married to a lady of the Romish religion, and a mutual agreement was made to prevent any future uneasiness with regard to the education of their children. According to this agreement, my brother was educated a Protestant, while I was brought up by my mother in her own principles; but she dying about three years ago, I soon, too soon, felt the effects of her loss. She was scarcely buried, when my religious liberties were invaded; my father confessor was forbid to come near me; I was continually importuned with the solicitations of ministers whom my religion made it criminal for me to hear; my disregard of their instructions was represented as the highest act of disobedience. And thus, by performing what I thought my duty, I incurred a father's displeasure. If I stopped my ears to the arguments that were offered me, it was said that I resolved to be deaf to the voice of truth. They gave me a Bible—I durst not read it; they would read it to me, but it was unlawful for me to hear them, and, therefore, I would not suffer them to do it: this was construed into obstinacy. I durst not be so vain as to consult my own shallow reason, when I did not know but it might contradict the infallible doctrines of our holy church. I was now treated with extreme severity; but, at last, wearied out by my father's and my brother's importunities, I resolved to appear more tractable, and even went so far as sometimes to suffer my self to be conducted to the parish church, and to pretend at least that I was almost convinced: but this piece of hypocrisy was soon punished; it reached my director's ears; when, prompted by a zeal for my salvation, he, in my father's absence, got admission into the house, and gave me a very severe lecture on the insincerity of my conduct; exhorted me to be steadfast, and confirmed me by abundance of pious arguments: but before he had done, my father, who had been sent for by somebody that saw him in the house, and who had overheard

great part of his discourse, entered the room in a violent passion, threatened to send the good man to jail, and actually kicked him down stairs. I was now treated with more severity than ever, was locked up in my room, and never permitted to see any company but such as were most disagreeable. A gentleman was introduced to me, and I was forced to receive his addresses: he was a zealous church-man, and so assiduous to please my father, that, in his presence, he seldom spoke of any thing but religion; and thus paying his court to him, instead of me, made him not more his friend than he made me his enemy. A day was appointed for my being married to the man in the world I had the greatest aversion to. What could I do? my prayers and intreaties were all to no purpose. I was drove to the last extremity, and had no other resource but flight. I therefore, one moon-light night, when all were in bed, disguised myself, and taking some of my mother's, and my own jewels, with the little money I had, putting it all, except five guineas, in a tea-chest, made my escape out of the house, by dropping out of the window, which was only one story high, and fled to the priest; but he not daring to conceal me, procured me a horse, and the same night I set out, hardly knowing where I went, and the next day reached this place before noon; when being very weary, I found a poor woman, to whom I told as much of my story as I thought necessary to raise her compassion: to her I gave the horse, which I had before paid for; and, by her recommendation, I had the favour of being admitted into your house as a servant.

Our surprise, Madam, exceeded all description; we let her go on without interruption, merely for want of words proper to form our excuses. For my part, a number of circumstances, as she proceeded, arose in my mind, that confirmed every word she spoke, with the force of the most convincing evidence; the genteel air of her dress, her polite unconstrained behaviour on all occasions, joined to an extensive knowledge of the works of many of the most polite authors. I recollected that I had once heard her repeat a few lines from Tasso, and I had some reason to believe that she

she was a perfect mistress both of the French and Italian languages. She is a Papist. Her excuses for not joining in the family devotion, the frivolous pretences with which she always avoided reading to me any piece of religion—It was certainly so—she must be a Papist. I thought both Lucius and myself perfect fools for not seeing through, and knowing her in this disguise, a disguise too thin to hide her character from the least discerning eye. I looked at her person; I was struck at the disorder of her dress—frightful disorder! could I see it without redoubled confusion? I reflected on the indignities she had suffered; brutal indignities! A lady of fortune and distinction, my superior—what savage treatment! how much she was injured! What a bustle had we been making about nothing, only to shew our ignorance and hasty passion! Lucius was justly confounded, and hung down his head. She was still standing. 'Pray, Madam, be seated,' said I. She obeyed, and took a chair; and while we were meditating an apology for our preposterous behaviour, she resumed—

'I know, Madam, that I pay my court to a Protestant with a very ill grace, when I attempt to do it by confessing myself a Catholick; but I know, however, that you will vindicate me from a crime which you have unjustly laid to my charge. I can, in this case, give such additional testimonies of my innocence, as to strike malice itself dumb. Much more shall I convince you, of whose goodness and humanity I have received a number of such pleasing instances as I never shall forget. Yet, as I am a Roman, you will probably join with my father, and while you preach to me of persecution and prejudice, sufficiently shew, like him, that you are capable of both. But do not Sir—O do not, Madam, abuse the confidence I have reposed in you. Don't give me up to the resentment of my relations.'—'No, Madam,' cried Lucius, 'I will intermeddle in your affairs no farther than you are pleased to approve. But what apology shall I make? How shall I excuse our conduct? You have been used so ill, that it is a kind of folly to ask your pardon. Indeed I am ashamed, and perfectly sorry for my behaviour; and

'what recompence is in our power to make you, freely demand it.'—'I thank you, Sir,' returned she, smiling; 'there is really no reason at all for these apologies. I cannot help saying, that appearances were against me; and while you thought me what I seemed, you ought to have done what you did.'—'This is very generous, Madam,' said I; 'and the only return we can make, is to interest ourselves in your happiness.'—'I thank you both,' said she: 'but will you not then take part with my father? Do you promise to leave me, whilst I stay with you, to the free enjoyment of the only true religion?'—'Yes, Madam,' Lucius replied, 'I promise it to you very sincerely. I am an enemy to persecution, and to every attempt to force the conscience, however misinformed. A true Protestant, from principle, hates all religious tyranny. He is, by profession, the friend of liberty, and ought therefore to check every unjust folly that would lead him to violate it on the meanest object. We allow of no inquisition. The man who is a bigot, and yet disclaims infallibility, is a contradiction to himself; a contradiction as great as any we can lay to your charge. We, believe me, Madam, deal not in contradictions; ours is the religion of common sense; we ask not a blind obedience; nor do we attempt, by shutting the Bible, and laying the understanding in fetters, to close the eyes and the ears to the voice of God. I therefore blame your father, and resolve to make use of all my power to restore you to a perfect liberty; to awaken his affection, and, consequently, to give you a proper share in his fortune; and to do this only in concert with you. Mean while, make use of this house as your own.'—'I sincerely thank you,' said she, 'and shall readily embrace your offer. To be restored to my father's affection is, indeed, a blessing equal to my highest ambition. To be restored to this, without wounding my conscience!—I should have nothing more to wish for. O my heart! how it longs for the tender union! But the flattering hope is vain, vain indeed! How shall I see him! With what indignation will he look upon his daughter, a fugitive, an alien, a
U wretch,

‘wretch, in his opinion, deserving his utmost hatred! Methinks I see him stand before me, and with a stern and steady look, reproach and upbraid me for the uneasiness I have given him. Ah, Madam!’ added she, ‘you have often found me in tears: you can now no longer wonder at the cause! I fear I must still be unhappy—perhaps not: however, I will hope the best.’ Here she endeavoured to compose her looks; and wiping her eyes, which began to swim with tears, she resumed—‘Well, I will indulge the pleasing reflection of embracing him, who was once the tenderest, most kind, and obliging parent. As to my fortune, that is already secure by the marriage settlement: as the daughters were to be educated in my mother’s principles, they were to possess her jointure; and, as I am the only daughter, it must all devolve to me, after my father’s decease. How happy will your friendship be to me! How richly shall I be repaid for the short uneasiness you have given me, if, by your means, I can live with peace and pleasure in my father’s house!’

I now thought it high time to let her see that I had the same sentiments as Lucius. I gave her very affectionate testimonies of my friendship, mingled with apologies for the severity of my treatment. I insisted that she should make use of my cloaths, and dress more suitably to her birth and fortune. Lucius took this opportunity to send to the constable, and to desire him to leave our old neighbour at liberty; and, after making him a small present for his trouble, and the poor woman a considerable one, as a recompence for the uneasiness we had given her, they both seemed perfectly satisfied.

We presently found that the servants, who had treated the young lady so ill, in a character more upon a level with theirs, had acted only from pride. They were all greatly offended at her not entering into their little cabals: they imagined that she thought herself above them; and, as she was preferred before them by me, they suspected that I encouraged her self-conceit, and, on this account, she was both envied and hated; they therefore rejoiced to see her pulled down, and contributed all they could to press her still lower. But, now she was placed in a more exalted view, and

no proper subject for their envy, there was a total change in their dispositions: her company, whenever it had been granted them, was an honour that, in the reflection, tickled their vanity; she had conferred a sort of dignity on their station, and was the kindest, most obliging lady; and so humble, that she seemed rather to be born a servant like them, than a baronet’s daughter. What fine things are birth and fortune! Happy accomplishments! that can thus change our actions, even in those minute circumstances, that are altogether indifferent!—But let me stop the current of my reflections.

Twenty times, I believe, I have been obliged to break off, and as often have I resumed my subject. I am now very much indisposed; and shall therefore take this opportunity to conclude, and to assure your ladyship, that I am, and ever shall be, your faithful friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLII.

I Can now, Madam, give you the conclusion of Dorothea’s story. One morning, about a week after that day of uneasiness and unjust suspicions, which I described in my last, the young lady came into my room, just at the time I was dressing, and insisted, with a good deal of gaiety, on performing her usual task; which, however I refused: but she staid till the servant, who had taken her office, was gone; when sitting down by me—‘Dear Madam,’ said she, ‘did not you observe, that I avoided coming before Mr. Smith, the gentleman who was your cousin’s companion in his travels? I really knew him at first sight. My father has a seat in Yorkshire, not far distant from his father’s. As the two old gentlemen are intimate friends, my brother and young Mr. Smith, whenever we chose to reside in that part of the country, were constant companions. His father frequently brought him to our house; so that, though his person is considerably altered, it was impossible for me not to know him. All my fear was, lest he should discover me under the disguise I had assumed. When he was here, I wished him a hundred times out of the house; and, while you

‘ you were in the room with him, I was more than once put to a terrible freight, by your sending for me to bring in something you wanted. I dreaded to see him, almost as much as I should have done my father. And, indeed, it appeared to me the same thing; for, if he had discovered me, he would certainly have made no secret of the place and situation in which he found me. He was never here but I was in the greatest uneasiness; and all the while he staid, I felt the most terrible palpitation of heart.’

‘ Now I recollect the circumstance, Madam,’ said I, ‘ I could not help taking notice of the many excuses you made to avoid coming into the room; and I thought there was some mystery in your behaviour, which I could not comprehend. But I cannot help observing, that had I been so unfortunate as to have thought of this yesterday, I should have construed it greatly to your disadvantage; and foolishly imagined, that it proceeded from a conscious guilt, and, perhaps, a fear of being discovered by a person of the very family you had robbed of such valuable effects. How blind are we! how easily hurried away by appearances! and how careful ought we to be in forming a judgment of others! I am now glad, heartily glad, that I did not, by recollecting this circumstance, encrease my own uneasiness, and your ill treatment. I never was so thoroughly convinced, as I am at present, that even forgetfulness, amongst our other imperfections, has its advantages. May I learn from this to be ever cautious of censure, and afraid of judging the actions of another! But pray, Madam, proceed.’

‘ When Mr. Smith first came in with your cousin,’ continued she, ‘ I was so happy as not to be observed; therefore, the moment I saw him, and heard his voice, I hurried out of the room, and afterwards took all imaginable precaution to avoid his seeing me. The last time he was here, I heard him in the hall; he was taking his leave: you were with him, and called me—I trembled, but, soon recovering myself, slipped out of the back-door unnoticed; when having taken a turn or two in the garden, I resolved to go into the wood, imagining that I might there, without danger of discovery, watch

the moment of his departure; but the trees prevented me. I then attempted to cross the avenue, at some distance from the house; and setting off very swiftly, ran against him with all my force. I staggered backwards; and recovering myself just as he turned about, he looked full in my face. I was struck with confusion. “ Miss Dorothea!” he cried; and, in a moment, as if recollecting himself, I heard him add, as I flew before him to the other side, “ I must be deceived! it can never be Dorothea!” I could hear no more. I fancied he followed me. Methought I heard the leaves rustle behind me. I did not stop till I was out of breath. My mind was agitated with my fears. The method I had taken to prevent a discovery, proved the very means of making myself known. I stood still—I listened. All was quiet. I reflected on what had passed; when changing my purpose, I resolved to step back, to call him aside from your cousin, and, by an ingenuous confession of the whole affair, to prevail upon him to keep my retreat a secret from my father: but in this flutter of spirits, so long was I in forming my resolution, and so many thoughts occurred both for and against my putting it in practice, that when I returned to the place, Mr. Smith and your cousin were almost out of sight. Strange caprice of the mind! Notwithstanding the affright and eager haste with which I ran from him; slowly as I had moved to find him, and in spite of all the reluctance I felt in forcing myself to take this step, I now looked upon his being gone as the greatest misfortune. I burst into tears, and——’

She was here interrupted by Lucius, who, coming into the room, told me that Mr. Smith was already returned, in company with an elderly gentleman, to pay us the visit he had promised at parting; and desiring that I would make haste to receive them, retired.

Poor Dorothea, who had revived every uneasy thought by the confidence she had been placing in me while thus unburthening her mind, was now, to all appearance, in a very unhappy situation. Her eyes were moistened with tears; when Lucius appeared, and gave a shock to her mind, by letting her know that this formidable Mr. Smith was

returned, with a gentleman, whom she immediately concluded to be her father, the person she dreaded most to see. Lucius was no sooner gone, than I beheld her sunk back in her chair; her eyes were half-closed, and her countenance expressive of the most lively distress. Struck with surprize, I ran to her relief, and endeavoured to rouse her from this situation, by assuring her that, if she pleased, she should not see Mr. Smith; but she interrupted me, by crying—“O my father!—my father is in the house!” I tried every method to comfort her; and, at last, after giving her the strongest assurances that I would use every argument to excuse and justify her, she began to moderate her uneasiness.

I then left her, full of the thoughts of vindicating her to the utmost of my power; when, as I went through the passage, I found that she was not mistaken in her conjectures; for, before I entered the room, I heard a voice cry—“Believe me, Sir, I know enough of them, and their priests too; and, damn her, if she had as much regard for her own salvation as I have for her—” Here I opened the door, and, by the entrance, cut short this fine expression of his pious concern for the future welfare of his daughter. They rose up, and, after the usual compliments, resumed their seats; when Mr. Smith, giving me much the same account of his meeting with Dorothea that she herself had just before done, let us know that the improbability of it's being really that lady, in such a dress, and so far from home, made him imagine that he must have been mistaken; but the circumstance was so remarkable, that, when he arrived at his father's, he could no more help mentioning it to him, than he could the pleasure he had received from the conversation of a gentleman that I was very well acquainted with, and whom he was proud to call his friend. Lucius and I smiled at this compliment; but as neither of us interrupted him, he proceeded to inform us, that his father, after asking him abundance of questions about her, to which he could give no satisfactory answer, at last told him, that she had left her father's house, and had been missing near six months, and that he could do no less than communicate what he heard to the person most concerned to know the place of her retirement. A letter was accordingly sent

to Dorothea's father, who came to learn the particulars from the young gentleman himself; and he being desirous to see Mr. Manly again, proposed to conduct him to us. He concluded with letting us know, that he was very glad she had been so wise as to chuse so honourable a retreat.

While we were at breakfast, the stranger gave us an account of his marriage with Dorothea's mother; related many family broils that happened on the score of religion and politics; complained of the disturbance he had met with from priests; that they had spoiled the best woman in the world, and robbed him of his daughter, by persuading the saucy baggage to run away from him. From thence he digressed to popish tyranny, to massacres, and the tortures of inquisitions; talked in favour of charity with the rage of a bigot; reproached the papists for the want of it; and, with all the intemperate heat and enthusiasm of party, swore that, if he had the power, he would not leave one of the bloody-minded monsters alive.

I was both surprized and shocked; and could not help replying with a sneer, that he must certainly be a very great enemy to persecution, since he should take such a generous method of shewing his love to mankind. To this he was going to reply, when Mr. Smith very respectfully put him in mind of his daughter, and several of his late wife's relations.

He immediately took the hint, and acknowledged that he had gone too far; said, that he loved his daughter better than she deserved; and having given her abundance of foul names, and nearly as many tender ones, as his resentment, or his affection, had the predominancy, strenuously desired to see the saucy, obstinate vagabond.

I dont know, Madam, what idea you will form of the character of this gentleman; a man of dissolute morals, standing up for the cause of religion and truth. He swore and preached in a breath, and uttered his sentiments with the positive assurance of a Jesuit. His words were dictated by his passions, which hurried him away with too much violence to suffer him to be guided by the calmer dictates of reason. And, indeed, so difficult was it to judge of his real character, that it was some time before I knew whether I ought to rank him

him amongst men of sense, or perfect brutes; though I was rather inclined to place him amongst the latter. But I was mistaken; he was really possessed of many amiable qualities, joined to a tolerable share of sense, which lay in a manner dormant till the heat of his passion had subsided.

As soon as he was silent, I let him know that he should speedily see his daughter, but that I thought it necessary to prepare both him and her for the interview. I then, without ceremony, began her history from the time I first knew her; related every circumstance of her behaviour that could contribute to set her character in a fair light; described the severe treatment she had met with; and concluded with relating what had passed that morning, and the condition in which I had left her. I called her my friend; I reproached him for endeavouring to enslave her conscience; and mingled these reproaches with more bitter ones on myself, for my unjust suspicions. When I began to speak, I resolved to plead her cause with all the art I was mistress of; but, carried away by the importance of the occasion, I soon lost sight of art. I spoke with the fervour of friendship; and while I was describing the scene of her distress, which our rash folly had involved her in, a gush of involuntary tears, which seemed to flow from my repentance, and his insensibility, raised the father in him to such a degree, as seemed to render it difficult for him to contain himself.

He could not now be kept from Dorothea. He confessed that he had been more to blame than he had ever imagined: he would see his poor girl immediately. He loved her better than ever he did. 'And did she,' cried he, 'behave so prudently? Did she say, she felt such tenderness for me? Did she not rather tell you, I am a passionate old fool? Well, she is a good girl, and I am glad I have found her. Let me see her, Madam, let me see her,' added he. 'I will see my poor daughter instantly.'

He was now in a situation that gave me the highest joy. I instantly arose, and ran up stairs. She was sitting in a melancholy, thoughtful posture; and, as soon as I entered the room, gave me a look that at once expressed her fear and

impatience; but her countenance began to brighten into cheerfulness, even before I had time to speak. She ran towards me, to embrace me; while I had only time to cry—'Victory! my dear Dorothea, victory! I have conquered.'—'I see it, Madam,' said she; 'but how? by what means?'—'I have now no time to answer you,' cried I; 'your father waits for you; he is subdued, he is softened, he longs to see you.' Here I took hold of her hand and led her down, her colour changing at every step. When we entered the room, her father ran to her, clasped her in his arms, and lavished upon her the most endearing expressions of kindness. It was purely the joy of a father who had recovered a dearly beloved child, after it had been, by some accident, lost, without the least mixture of reproach or bitterness. Dorothea was silent for some time, and only expressed her joy by her tears; but at last, pressing his hand—'Do you, do you, dear Sir, forgive me!' cried she. He gave her the warmest assurances that he did, embraced her again, took his chair, and made her sit by him.

It is easy to conceive, Madam, that Lucius and I must have great delight in observing the happiness to which we had so greatly contributed. For my part, I received many engaging compliments from both father and daughter, with which Lucius seemed more pleased than if they had been paid to himself.

Mr. Smith, I had observed, was extremely attentive to the praises I had bestowed on Dorothea; he was greatly affected with her story; and, for the rest of the day, seemed to bear an uncommon share in the happy reconciliation. He observed all her motions, and methought there was something in his air that expressed as much of the lover as the friend. For her part, she viewed him without terror; he was no longer the formidable man that had filled her with such dreadful apprehensions; and, so far from having any inclination to run away, she conversed with him with all the freedom of an old acquaintance.

I am strangely addicted to the writing of long letters, which, I am afraid, tire you; and, for the future, I believe, I must be less communicative, in order to be less troublesome. Be pleased to pre-

sent

sent my compliments to his lordship; and be assured that, whether my letters are long or short, I shall always be, as I am at present, your sincere and most affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLIII.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR rallying so agreeably an assertion in one of my former letters, that rural scenes are the most unfruitful of adventures, has so much the air of a compliment, that, however undeserved, I think I ought to thank you for it. You may consider Dorothea's story in what light you please; the interest you are pleased to take in her good or bad fortune, ought to induce me to send you the particulars which are still behind. Without any farther preamble, therefore, I proceed.

Believe me, Madam, there is as great a difference between Dorothea's father, when angry, and when pleased, as between any two persons upon earth; you would not even take him to be the same man; were it possible for you to have been an hour or two in his company, after his reconciliation, even you must have thought my last letter a vile slander on his character. So much do these furious passions distort the mind!

The rest of the day was spent very agreeably; and, at the same time, nothing was omitted that could contribute to confirm the happiness of the amiable Dorothea. Lucius artfully introduced the subject of religious liberty, which he proved to be the birthright of every reasonable being. He made use of the most convincing arguments. He quoted the incomparable Mr. Locke's piece* on this subject; a work which, he assured us, was of more value than a Peruvian mine. A high price, I must confess. Mr. Smith joined with Lucius to answer some objections. He then represented persecution as arraigning the infinite sagacity of the sovereign Creator of all things, who, to make room for heaven-born Charity, had wisely given such a variety of tastes, degrees of capacity and understanding, to the mind of man, from

whence result the love of truth, and the test of every kind and benevolent affection. Uniformity of sentiment, Madam, is, I find, in his opinion, no more desirable, than the dull uniform prospect of a smooth and wide-stretched plain; or rather a large tract of barren sand, where no interrupting shades, none of the blooming beauties that arise from the varied tints of trees, of shrubs, of turfs, of flowers, diversify the enlivening prospect; whilst Charity, amidst the greatest variety of tempers, educations, and capacities, like the invigorating power of the sun, presents the most lovely scene, and gives life, and spirit, and beauty, to all around: mutual complacency, and benevolence, breathe an eternal spring; and at once blossom, bear fruit, and yield a friendly shade.

Methinks I hear him still, and still see the blaze of humanity darting from his eyes; when he added—'With this view do I look upon my native country, the seat of Liberty, and her sister's earthly throne. In this view let us regard the whole world. The honest Turk shall be my friend; the sober, faithful Chinese, that lays the divine Confucius to his heart; and the Indian of either world, blest with simple innocence and native truth, shall be my brothers. Wherever I find a man who loves his God, and loves mankind, I will hug him to my breast.'

Here Lucius paused a while; and then smiling, asked Dorothea, what she thought of this rant? 'Am I not, Madam,' said he, 'in the right? is not this a very desirable disposition of mind?' She gave her approbation; on which he replied—'Then what must you think of Popery, with her smooth uniformity of barrens sands, which, blown with the baleful wind of persecution, arise in curling torrents, and spread ruin and destruction over all the wide creation? Nor can the storm be laid till showers of blood, pouring from honest hearts, beat down the dust, and, for a time, hush the wild uproar to a calm.'

'Forgive me, Madam,' added Lucius, seeing her bite her lips, 'I do but just touch on a subject, which, if dressed in plain

* Letter on Toleration.

plainer language, would, I am sure, wound your tender heart. Persecution, whether in Papist or Protestant, is a tempest raised by the breath of hell. And, believe me, if there can be a Christian without humanity and charity, a Devil may be a Saint.

Mr. Smith, who appeared not a little delighted with Lucius's flights, and who, doubtless, comprehended his motive for introducing this subject, took care to keep it up for some time longer. He entered upon the cause of liberty as connected with a free enquiry, and shewed the necessity of making use of reason, in order to discover truth from error. He was seconded by Dorothea's father; and Lucius closed their observations, by giving a slight glance at the principal systems of religion throughout the world. The various pretences to infallibility were considered and exposed in all; the folly of suffering the conscience to be enslaved by the Dervise, or the Christian priest, proved equally ridiculous; and the impossibility of discovering truth from error, where no enquiry was made, as great in the zealot of Rome and London as in that of Turkey or Siam.

These subjects, Madam, were managed with such delicacy, that it was impossible for even Dorothea to be offended. She seemed to listen with pleasure; and, when it was done, said, with a smile, that they had inspired her with a love of truth, and that, though she was very sure she should be a Catholick as long as she lived, yet, for the future, she would be one upon rational principles, and boldly venture to study the truth of her religion, and to read even those pieces with care that had been wrote against it.

Mr. Smith received this declaration with as great an appearance of pleasure as even her father himself: and nothing was omitted that could confirm this agreeable disposition.

You perceive, I dare say, the tedious dulness into which I am sinking. My spirits, indeed, begin to flag. I will, therefore, hasten to a conclusion, lest a more interesting subject should intervene, and demand my pen.

The rest of our conversation was little more than chit-chat. Dorothea had many questions to ask concerning her friends in the country, some of whom were dead, and some were married; and

these, though they furnished not the least kind of amusement to us, as their very names were unknown, engaged almost her whole attention for the little time she had to stay.

The next morning I had the mortification of taking leave of Dorothea, whose father would not be prevailed upon to stay any longer. We parted with many reciprocal expressions of affection. But, to the no small surprize of Lucius, Mr. Smith, who, at their first meeting, of his own accord had proposed to stay with us at least a week, resolved to accompany them; nor could we, by all the arguments in our power, induce him to keep his word.

I have only one word more to add: yesterday it was a month since they left us; and we have this minute received a letter from Mr. Smith, in which he informs us, that what severity and restraint could not do, mildness and freedom have accomplished; that the amiable Dorothea is already a Protestant, and that he hopes for the happiness of speedily possessing the lovely convert.

It is with great difficulty that I have been able to write thus far; I am really very ill, but as much as ever your ladyship's affectionate

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLIV.

I Have now, Madam, the pleasure of informing you, that we have another person added to the family; you, I am sure, will be glad to find that I am able to tell you so. I am now a mother in the strictest sense, and was happily brought to bed three weeks ago.

O my friend! how delightfully does the mind glow with gratitude, thus rising from the struggle of convulsive pangs, from the languor of expiring life! The dear helpless infant, too, the subject of our future care, and future joy! With what new, what tender sensations, do we view the little gift of Nature entrusted to our protection! Methought a beam of heavenly comfort shot through my soul! Ease, joy—transporting joy, and mingled fondness: all delight, extasy, and love! My heart overflowed at once with gratitude, and the softest maternal affection.

Before the first week was over, I began to be alarmed, lest my fondness for my boy should supersede my affection

fection for my girl. I told my fears to Marilla, who was constantly with me, and desired that I might have her brought to me every day: and while I endeavour to divide my heart between them both, the pretty creature, by twenty winning ways, seems to strive to hold fast my affections. My fears, Madam, were groundless: I must love her; and I am really glad that my affections so easily correspond with my duty.

After this rambling, incoherent letter, you will not wonder if I tell you that, though I am as well as can be expected, my head is still very weak: indeed my eyes fail me, and I am forced to conclude. May every blessing attend you. I am, yours, &c.

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLV.

DEAR MADAM,

IT was with extreme concern that I read your last letter. Indeed, I sincerely sympathize in your affliction. I don't wonder that the sudden death of a person, so dear to you as his lordship was, should damp all your spirits, and make the most sprightly pen that ever wrote deal in the most solemn and awful truths. Sickness, pain, and death, have indeed a natural tendency to check the sallies of a gay disposition; to call back the thoughts from the pleasurable amusements, the vain pursuits of life; and, for a while, to confine them to the more important review of our own conduct: they are bitter medicines, but such as have the most healing virtues—virtues adapted to strengthen, improve, and exalt the mind. To be forced to take a final leave of that form we love; to bid a long adieu to the spirit with whom we have daily conversed with pleasing intercourse—is very hard; the sensible heart-strings must feel the dreadful rent, the distressful mind is torn with anguish. But, O Madam! why do you say *for ever*? The separation is not surely for ever. Soon you will see him in a more lovely form. Soon the well known mind, clothed with heavenly radiance, will congratulate your arrival on the blissful shore. Why do you complain that 'he is now a senseless lump of clay?' Mistake not the object of your affection, he is all life and active spirit. Those shining virtues that, while you enumerate

them, seem to add to your grief, and which, you tell me, will ever renew your sorrow, ought to be the pleasing source of joy. Though you lament his loss, lament not his exaltation, nor derive your tears from the very subject of his felicity. He is in the land of virtue; it's native clime. How often do you repeat the words, *poor, dear man!* and dwell on sounds expressive only of pity! Pity, Madam, is not for angels. It is you alone who are the sufferer. O, could you but be sensible of his happiness, ecstasy and transporting rapture would dry up your tears! Would you wish him back? Would you have him, to please you, leave the seats of bliss, and exchange the regions of unfading felicity, for a world of sin, transient happiness, intermingled with pain and trouble? No, this you cannot wish. 'But he was happy too soon.' Too soon his pain, and sorrow, and dangerous state of trial, were at an end. You would have prolonged his misery. If this be love, what is hatred?

O my dear friend! recollect yourself, and, filled with a generous and refined devotion, repose your mind on God. Endeavour to lose the sense of your own private apparent loss in the delightful contemplation of his transcendent goodness. Repose yourself on his sovereign will, whose determinations are always safest, wisest, best. Let every dewy tear be wiped away by the happiness of him you love. Love him still, but be disinterested in your affection; imitate and rejoice in his virtues; and, while you dwell with pleasure on his felicity, anticipate your own.

' Death's but a path that must be trod,
' If man would ever pass to God;
' A port of calms, a state of ease,
' From the rough rage of swelling seas.
' Nor can the parted body know,
' Nor wants the soul these forms of woe.
' As men who long in prison dwell,
' With lamps that glitter round the cell,
' Whene'er their suff'ring years are run,
' Spring forth to greet the glitt'ring sun:
' Such joys, though far transcending sense,
' Have pious souls at parting hence.
' On earth, and in the body plac'd,
' A few and evil years they waste:
' But when their chains are cast aside,
' See the gay scene unfolding wide,
' Clap the glad wing, and tow'r away,
' And mingle with the blaze of day.'

PARNELL.

With

With the most tender sympathy and commiseration, believe me to be, dear Madam, your ladyship's most affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLVI.

DEAR MADAM,

HOW great is the power of friendship! With one dash of your pen you involve me in grief, and oblige me, by an irresistible force, to taste the bitterness of your sorrow: with the next, you inspire me with ten thousand sensations, all of them agreeable, all delightful. Nothing in the world, Madam, could give Lucius and me greater pleasure, than your proposal to honour us with your company—Honour do I say? my friendship is offended at the compliment, and would let you know that vanity has no share in our satisfaction. We heartily embrace your offer; and nothing shall be wanting, on our part, to make your residence with us perfectly happy.

But have you, indeed, the resolution to leave the delights of the gay circle, the glittering splendor of conspicuous greatness? Can you really have the courage to bid adieu to pomp, and all the parade of ostentation and vanity, the dear delight of a thousand fine ladies, and, in their opinion, the summit of all human happiness? Can you forsake the residence of polite flattery and compliment, to dwell with simple truth and sincere friendship? and the important hurry of attending on the modes and forms of greatness, for perfect liberty, and a life gliding on in the clear smooth stream of rural peace?

O Madam! how many delightful ideas rush upon my mind, upon the prospect of such an addition to our little friendly circle? Your enlivening wit, tempered with sober contemplation, will heighten all the other blessings I enjoy. Ever since I have received your letter—the most welcome letter I ever received—my imagination has been filled with the most pleasing images, nor can I divert it from the flattering subject. I have already rambled with you, in idea, along my most favourite walks, and have sallied out with you to taste the fragrant breath of the morning.—But whither does my roving fancy carry me? I beg pardon, Madam, for thus amusing you

with idle visions; but friendship would have it so, and I only obeyed its dictates.

We had yesterday a piece of news that struck us with an uncommon surprize. My father, Mr. Manly I mean, received a letter from Holland, which informed him, that his brother, who had parted from him in disgust about twenty years ago, and who had never seen him since, was dead, and had left him, in money and effects, to the value of forty thousand pounds.

Lucius and I happened to be present at the receipt of this letter, which immediately opened a very affecting scene. It was read by my father, with a composure of countenance which would not even suffer us to guess at the contents. He had no sooner run it over, than giving Sophronia a most affectionate look—‘My dear,’ said he, ‘you have been a witness of my extravagance and folly; and it is now in my power to let you see that my repentance is sincere, and that no change of fortune can make me relapse into the wild pursuits of vice. It is only since my distresses, that I have known what it is to live: since that time, my happiness has been centered in you and my family; to make you happy forms the most pleasing part of my life, and it will ever do so. This alone deserves the name of life. O my dear, your virtues have fixed me yours for ever. I here find that my brother is dead. I thought he had been long dead. He died a bachelor, and has left me all his effects. Had this happened some years ago, I had been still what I now blush to think that I ever was.’ Here the tears stood in his eyes. He was standing, and my mother was seated before him. His looks and expressions, joined to her surprize, had hitherto kept her motionless; but she was now unable to contain herself any longer; she suddenly arose, and threw her arms about his neck. He embraced her; he pressed her to his heart, crying—‘No, my Sophronia, my vices shall never more disturb the quiet of this dear breast.’ She begged him not to mention the name of vice: told him, that his affection was all that was necessary to make her happy; and that was wealth enough, and of more importance to her than all the riches in the world; and that with such a husband,

and such children, she had, for a good while past, thought herself the happiest woman in England.

At the word *children*, she cast an affectionate look at Lucius, Marilla, and me; at least, my heart was willing to rank me among the number of those from whose tenderness she derived so much of her satisfaction. But the moment she observed me, she withdrew her arms, and seeming to struggle with her tenderness, stepped back, and again seated herself in her chair.

My father, at the same time, turned to Lucius and Marilla; called them his dear, his virtuous children; and Lucius, in particular, his benefactor and his friend; and added something about gratitude, which Lucius could not suffer. 'Dear Sir,' said he, 'forbear these moving expressions of your goodness. For Heaven's sake, talk not of gratitude to me. What must I be, if I could hear, with patience, such language from a father—a tender and affectionate father! I know you love me; then why do you make use of words that shock my love to you, and which both nature and duty forbid my hearing?'

My father made no reply, but saluted Marilla and me; and, after giving me some particular expressions of affection, we all took our seats; when, giving the letter to Lucius, he desired him to read it, which he had no sooner done, than the conversation turned upon the particulars.

One who reflects on the misfortunes of this family, would be apt to conceive, that such a sudden and unexpected change in their situation must have occasioned the most extravagant transports of joy; and if he had only a superficial knowledge of human nature, that my father's behaviour was extremely unnatural. Marilla's eyes, indeed, sparkled with a peculiar pleasure; and I could not help expressing a lively satisfaction, from considering that Lucius would now gain from his father an equivalent to what he had acquired from mine: and thus, being placed more upon a level as to circumstances, approve my father's conduct to the most avaricious of his friends. The day was spent with rather more gravity than usual. But the want of mirth was supplied by the sweet complacency of friendly hearts, exulting with exquisite joy in the happiness of

each other; while the composure and equanimity of mind which appeared in those most concerned, still heightened the opinion I had conceived of their characters.

I ought, Madam, to have told you, that the occasion of our visit at my father's was to see our daughter; the dear sweet creature is very much indisposed, and the doctor informs us that her disorder will end in the small-pox.

Let me speedily know how long it will be before I shall have the pleasure of telling you, in person, how much I am your affectionate friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLVII.

DEAR MADAM,

HOW are the sweets of life intermingled with bitterness! My poor dear girl has now left the world, and gone to the regions of spotless innocence and peace. I had almost said, that innocence itself is dead; and fled to its native skies—my little son occurs to my thoughts; and I retract the expression. That opening mind, which every day received new ideas, now feels the full blaze of truth, and perhaps would look with contempt on the boasted knowledge of mortals. Her pretty laugh, the innocent lisp of her half-formed sentences, when, with little sportive arts, she strove to court my smiles, are ever lost to me.

Oh, why did I let her take such hold of my heart! How vain were my fears, lest I should not love her as I ought! But yet, methinks, had I loved her less—I cannot think of that neither—I would not love her less. But she is happy, pretty lovely cherub! she is happy; for ever free from vice, from care, and pain, and sorrow.

She was seized with the small-pox, as the physician had foretold; a painful and a loathsome disease! My affection, and the sense of my duty, compelled me to see her. I saw her every day. But, O Madam! how was the sense of her loss swallowed up by my solicitude for my son, who was seized with the same distemper about twenty-four hours before she died! O my heart! what did I feel! I blamed my rashness—and, as if my duty and affection had been a crime, reproached myself for what deserved no reproach.





reproach. With a noble fortitude, Lucius endeavoured to cheer my spirits, and to raise my hopes. He talked of resignation, and of Providence; and felt himself the resignation he would inspire. At first the task was hard, but soon the healing balm ran through my soul—he ended, and all within was peace. Every favourable symptom soon appeared, and with them soothing Hope. In short, he grew past danger—he recovered, and my grief was lost in joy.

In my present situation, while I consider together the loss of a child, that I loved almost as much as if nature had bid me love; and the recovery of another, whom maternal affection had entwined about my heart; my mind enjoys all the united force of serenity, resignation, and thankfulness. I consider my dear infant as left below for future usefulness, to be the delight of his family, and a blessing to mankind; spared, that he may rise to high attainments in virtue, to perpetuate his name, and the benevolence that glows in his father's breast, when his father, and your Felicia, shall be no more; and, in short, as spared to give him room to obtain those more glorious, more exquisite, more refined delights, in the world of bliss, to which the negative goodness of helpless infancy can hardly be supposed to be entitled.

You see, Madam, that, in this plain, I have left titles, grandeur, and shining posts of honour, to be struggled for by the busy world. May virtue be the glory of my son; I am anxious for no other dignities. May the doing good be his employment, his post of honour. O! call not this humility; it is a pride of the noblest kind. These are the flattering hopes that swell a mother's breast; and may they be the presage of blessings, stretched out to the farthest limits of time; while a MANLY, with all the virtues of my Lucius, shall, in succession, arise in every age, with calm benevolence to meditate on happiness, and diffuse its influence all around! O, how my heart beats with the great idea!—My child is this moment brought to me: with what elevated tenderness do I look upon him! I give him the

breast he longs for, I press him to my bosom, and write again.

May these lips, that now draw thy sustenance from me, be ever the fountain of truth, ever pure in their expressions, and strangers to the wanton's kiss! May the joys of innocence, and as much peace as mortals can know, always dwell within this little heart! And when this heart shall melt with softness for some lovely maid, may she return with purity thy flame, and render all thy happiness complete!—Bless me! what nonsense I am writing, with my child in my lap! But I attempt in vain to lose sight of the subject, and I hope the candour of friendship will bear with the workings of maternal affection.

Lucius is now engaged in an employment that you will doubtless imagine to be extremely visionary. He is studying the history of man from his most early infancy. And as his son is much too young to express his ideas in any other way but by the traces of his countenance, and by inarticulate sounds, he examines these with a particular attention, in order to discover the strength of his perceptions, and the progress of his ideas. This employment is extremely suitable to his philosophick turn of mind; though I must confess, that it sometimes makes me laugh to see the assiduous care with which he endeavours to trace the impressions made on the little features of a face which nature has scarcely finished, but which, however, sufficiently describe wonder, pleasure, and pain. From this study Lucius proposes to derive the greatest advantages: he will have an early knowledge of a heart, in the happiness of which he is most nearly concerned; and by this discover the degrees and bent of the passions, the strength of the moral taste; and determine, with the greatest evidence, this important truth, whether there are any seeds of vice implanted in the heart: a doctrine contended for by many learned and good men, with as much heat and zeal as if vice was the highest glory and perfection of human nature.

So assiduous is he already in this task, that he has even interfered in my choice of a nursery-maid, and prevailed upon me to make this office worth the attendance of a

* The reader may find a concise and excellent history of the understanding, and the passions, in the Preceptor, Vol. II. Book i. Sect. 1. A performance that the editor fears to commend, lest he should injure it by his praise.

person of solidity and understanding; one of a tolerable education, and of a sober, reputable family. And this was the more necessary, as she is obliged to deviate from the common practice, and to regulate her actions by his, or my directions, in the minutest particulars. He is such a friend to nature, that he will not suffer her to be constrained; the body must not be bound up with rollers, nor smothered with the heat of flannel; be used with a mistaken delicacy, and too closely preserved from the inclemency of the weather. But I must not enter into particulars; only this I shall say, that he is so unfashionably polite, as to consider the mother's suckling her own child as one of the indispensable obligations of nature; as a duty that can never be transferred to another, except in a case of the utmost necessity: and, indeed, had I been as averse to conviction upon this head as the gay fine lady at court, I must have either renounced all pretensions to reason, or suffered myself to own the force of his arguments.

But his first study is to cultivate the understanding; or, as Mr. Thompson expresses it—

'To teach the young idea how to shoot.'

The noblest employment that can exercise the attention of a reasonable being! an employment that, however, must at present be confined within a narrow compass; since, for some time, it can only consist in preserving the confused undistinguishing capacity of infancy from receiving bad impressions: and here the care ought, in his opinion, to begin with life itself. The tender brain must not be disturbed; nor the mind, in its first exertions, be started by loud or sudden noises. This care increases in proportion as the mind enlarges; and as it still continues capable of receiving impressions from objects of terror, these must still be industriously excluded. About a month ago, when we were at my father's, Lucius was very much ruffled at finding his daughter afraid of the dark. He was certain that—pardon the impropriety of the expression—an object that had so frequently occurred, and which must have been familiar to the child, could never excite such fear,

had not its mind been taught to connect with it some unnatural and terrifying ideas. This was, in the esteem of Lucius, an affair of great importance: he searched into the cause, and found that one of the servants had frightened the pretty creature, with threats of Tom Dark, and other words which to children are of direful sound. Would you believe it, Madam? for this cause alone, he prevailed on his mother to turn away the poor girl! I confess that I was so struck with this, that I could not forbear telling him, that I thought he behaved in a very arbitrary and cruel manner: when, in justification of his conduct, he ran to his sister's closet, fetched a volume of the Spectator, and read, before all the servants, a performance on that very subject, that struck me dumb. However, he had no objection to my providing for the girl till I could get her another place: and, in return for this civility, she has had the ingratitude, and the impudence, to raise a report, that Lucius had this child by me before our marriage. But, in the country, no vice is indulged with such a keen relish as slander.

Lucius has been very careful in his remarks on the several ways by which the mind of infancy is industriously impressed with the most hateful extremes of all the passions*, selfishness, pride, revenge, insolence, avarice, cruelty, and, in short, all the vices which spring up in after life; when the mind is ruined without design, and the heart in sport taught to be vicious before the tongue can speak, and all the tender sensibilities of humanity are utterly perverted. Against these methods of corruption he proposes to be ever on his guard, because traces so early made are seldom perfectly erased: and, indeed, this kind of treatment ought more to be avoided, as it is infinitely more fatal in its consequences than all the distempers that can affect the bodily health.

This, Madam, though of prodigious importance, is only a negative kind of education. But, to implant a love of truth, and a thirst after knowledge; to teach the young understanding to exert its powers; to refine, to elevate, to enlarge the ideas; and to lead the eager, admiring youth, by the sweet allure-

See some hints of these methods of corruption in the note to page 13. Vol. I. which the reader may easily enlarge from his own observations on the conduct of parents, nurses, &c.

ments of pleasure, to the highest attainments in virtue, to rectitude of manners, to rejoice early in his immortality, and to anticipate the divine delights of heaven by a disinterested love for mankind; a love widely extended, and ever prompting to acts of beneficence and diffusive goodness: this is an employment as noble as the attainment is godlike, and to this does Lucius already raise his ideas; this he considers as the previous study, the earliest exercise of childhood. He proposes to dress up morality, and the sublimest truths of natural religion, in the easy * language of infancy; and by degrees to pour in more and more light, as the understanding enlarges, and the mind grows more and more capacious; and by encouraging the restless curiosity natural to children, give incessant employment for the rational faculties. He considers English as the most important of all the languages to an Englishman. His child, he says, shall study all it's beauties, learn to read with a grace, and, if possible, to write with elegance; to adapt his language to his sentiments, and to express his thoughts with ease and fluency; to form his style, and to settle his judgment, by a careful attention to the works of the most celebrated English authors; be taught to point out their beauties, to comment on the noble sentiment, to relish, even to rapture, the tender beauties of *Spencer*, the lightning of *Shakespeare*, and the shining glory of *Milton*.

The languages he considers only as the key to further knowledge, and not knowledge itself: these, even in the midst of study, he would render subservient to his grand design, and make the dry task of words delightful by a continual acquisition of agreeable sensations and improved ideas. He would please himself with hearing the voice of unprejudiced nature, a mind unbiassed with the forms of thinking which prevail amongst mankind, decide in what consists the merit of such and such an action; he would hear the tongue of innocence explain the glory or infamy of an *Alexander*, a *Trajan*, or a *Domi-*

tian; he would cherish and fix the just sentiment, would improve the random thought, and, where the judgment failed, would set it right. How delightful must this exercise of the faculties be to a child! To be led by it's own reflections to a constant series of new ideas—how manly, how rational the entertainment! It must inspire the mind with a continual spring of self-complacency, and make the most rugged steps to learning pleasant. Lucius would endeavour to obtain the assistance of some decayed gentleman adorned at once with piety, good-nature, learning, a knowledge of mankind, and a free and genteel address. A person of this character must be the tutor of his son, and share with him in the important task; he must live in the family, and in all respects be treated like a gentleman and a friend. Learning will thus be made a high entertainment, especially as it will be varied, at proper intervals, by the history and constitution of our own country. Under their conduct, the aspiring youth must improve in knowledge and understanding, must be introduced early into life, emboldened, encouraged to speak, and to bear a part in the most polite conversation, at an age when learning generally consists in mere sounds, and pleasure in vanity and folly: and, while a youth, we shall have the rational delight of seeing our child a man, a friend, a companion.

I am prepared to hear you laugh at me, and express your surprize that, notwithstanding the great uncertainty of life, I can thus launch into futurity; talk of embellishing a mind yet incapable of fixed ideas; and from an infant of two months old, by the strength of imagination, draw a line parallel to that of time, and reckon our duration by that of the sun and moon. But blame me as much as you please, some of the sweetest comforts of life depend on expectation; and was it not for hope, which recreates the mind with distant prospects of pleasure, our very enjoyments would be apt to flatten, and life itself grow dull and insipid. But it is not only a remedy for the vapours, and the most effec-

* Something of this kind is already attempted in the *Christmas Box*, two small volumes printed for the use of children.

tual cure for the restless mind; it is a cordial comfort to the distressed, and joy to the miserable.

Education, Madam, is a daily topic of discourse, a subject to us the most interesting; can my friend then think it impertinent? But if it appear so now, as you will soon be a mother, you will soon be convinced of it's importance. Lucius is now so fond of it, that he talks of little else; he is continually quoting to me the best authors on the subject, and from these I have collected my ideas, which, as they are ever present to my mind, I should have found some difficulty to suppress.

Hasten, dear Madam, by your presence, the happiness of your affectionate

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLVIII.

HOW tedious is Time, when his wings are loaded with expectation! My last, I imagined, would have concluded our epistolary correspondence, at least for some years. I proposed to throw aside my pen, to bid an eternal adieu to tedious narrations, high flights, rapturous nonsense, and long letters; but the very morning in which we were preparing to set out to meet you, with an alacrity inspired by our joy, to be disappointed with a fortnight's delay, what a damp did it give to my spirits! I could hardly meet with a greater disappointment. Let me have no more of your letters, Madam, I beseech you. A fortnight! fifteen days!—indeed it is quite intolerable.

We have had a very diverting account, from my sister Marilla, of a most singular courtship. My wise cousin, it seems, has had the misfortune to fall desperately in love with that engaging lady. The mighty wound was given at our house; but he had not there the power to make it known: he waited for a more favourable opportunity, which he had the penetration to foresee might soon arrive; and, therefore, recommending himself as the best coachman in the universe, he earnestly begged that she would do him the honour to suffer him to drive her home in her chaise. She readily consented to the proposal; and he, perhaps, drawing a favourable

conclusion from her easy compliance, was all life and thankfulness.

They accordingly mounted, and had drove but a small distance from the house, when his natural self-conceit proving too strong for his bashfulness, he could not resist the present moment, and accordingly began with praising himself; a method of courtship, though a little uncommon, not altogether irrational: for as a person, desirous to exchange a sorry piece of goods for a better, should prudently confine all his oratory to one side; so he imagined that he ought to give her a high opinion of his own merit, and not, by increasing her vanity by a misapplied flattery, make the disproportion greater than it really was. In consequence of this refined sophistry, and with the assistance of the phrase, *though I say it that should not say it*, which he introduced at proper intervals to shew his modesty, he began a long detail of his useful travels; and very gallantly concluded with telling her, that though he had conversed with, and even had the honour to enjoy the good graces of the finest ladies in France and Italy, he was never made a captive to the little divinity till now.

Marilla, who had been held a good while in suspense, could not help being surprized at this declaration, which, however, she was so cruel as to turn into ridicule. The gaiety of her reply disconcerted him for some moments: but, recovering himself, he answered very gravely, that he loved, and would for ever love her; and that, as it was not in her power to prevent it, she ought to think of some way of making him happy, since that would be the ready way to make herself so. And that she could never have a better husband, since he would do all in his power to serve her.

His thoughts were so taken up with this answer, that, quite forgetful of his office, he drove against a tree, which unluckily grew by the side of the road; when, the wheel breaking, poor Marilla was thrown in the dirt; while the squire, giving a spring, flounced into an adjacent ditch, which happened to be full of water. Marilla, who had not received the least hurt, was presently on her feet, extending her hand to the relief of the poor dripping squire, which, by his touch, was as desired as his own. She found him shaking his ears, and, with

with a most distressful countenance, attempting to clamber up the bank. His hat and wig floated on the stream, his face was as much besmeared as his cloaths, and his whole figure such as would have excited laughter in any other person but herself; but to her it was only an object of pity.

The servants, who were riding at some distance, no sooner beheld his miserable plight, than they made up to his assistance, and presently set him on dry land. Having recovered his hat and wig, he began, with great confusion, to make his apology, which she interrupted, by desiring him only to mind his own health, to take one of the horses, and to ride with all the haste he could to her father's, which was then not half a mile distant; and, ordering her servants to bring home the chaise, promised to follow him on foot. My cousin readily obeyed; and Marilla, who walks much better than most ladies about St. James's, was not very long after him. She entered the house unperceived, and having washed herself, and changed her cloaths, went down to the parlour, where she found her lover sitting with my father by a good fire: he had been accommodated with a large dram, as a preservative from the effects of the cold; and care being taken to see him cleaned, and with fresh apparel put in a more comfortable plight, he was now in a proper situation to receive her.

Was it possible for my poor cousin to begin his amour under more unlucky auspices! To be thus soufed, and, falling from his aspiring hope, to become an object worthy of derision, rather than pity! What a painful humiliation! But, though I lament his fate, he had still comforts, which the diffident and tender lover could never, on the like occasion, have experienced: a hidden reserve of vanity now stood his friend, and enabled him to bear up manfully under his disgrace.

Marilla had no sooner opened the door, than my cousin—who, having recollected, as he himself has since confessed, the obliging manner with which she had endeavoured to help him out of the ditch, the little care she took of herself, and her great concern for him, had not the least doubt but that she was perfectly in love with him—flew to her with open arms, gave her a rude kiss, and, seizing hold of her hand, pulled her

towards my father, who, as well as Marilla, was all amazement. My cousin desired his fair-one not to be so coy; adding, that as he loved her, and she loved him, their parents consent was all that was necessary to their marriage; and then addressing himself to my father, cried, with the same vivacity—
 'Egad, Sir, you know my fortune, 'looker, and so forth; and I hope you 'have no objection to my having the 'honour of being *votre petit-fils*.'—
 'The honour of being my grandson!' cried my father, laughing; 'how is that?'
 'One language at a time, Sir, I beseech you. I don't understand—' He was here interrupted by Marilla, who, recovering the use of her tongue, cried out, 'What do you mean, Sir? Let go my hand—I cannot comprehend what you would be at. I love you!—' 'You!—What insolence!' And now, exerting all her strength, she gained her liberty, and instantly flung out of the room.

As soon as she was gone, my father told him, very frankly, that he could not possibly account for this rude behaviour; and that, when he came to his house in such a deplorable condition, he did not think it was with design to affront his daughter; which, whatever were his motives, he would not suffer. My cousin assured him, with many oaths, that he was in earnest, and that he only intended to ask his consent to marry his daughter, for that he had convincing proofs that she loved him. My father answered, that he could never believe it; but that, if it was true, he had no objection to his family and fortune; and therefore insisted upon knowing what reason he had to believe that she had an affection for him. My cousin replied, with a confident laugh, that he knew well enough how to judge; and that a lady might tell the loved without making use of words; that if my father knew all, he would be of his mind; and that, after what had passed, she ought not to have given herself such airs; but it was all one, he could be as indifferent as her. Marilla now returned, and interrupted a conversation that was growing very warm on my father's side.

As she entered the room, her young spark, resolving to humble her, put on a look of insensibility, and walked by her with a careless, affected, and self-satisfied air; but seeming not to observe it,

it, she seated herself close by her father, and in a calm and complaisant manner desired him to sit down. He obeyed with a smile, when the old gentleman repeated his command to explain, before his daughter, what he meant by his insinuations. But he did not chuse to hear him; and leaning his elbow on his knee, and staring up in Marilla's face, he asked her, which of those pretty hands it was that he had the misfortune to daub, when she was so kind as to strive to help him out of the ditch. He then proposed, that she should hold it out to him, that he might kiss it; called her a dear, sweet, fond fool; swore she could not help it; she was frightened for him, and off her guard, or else it would have been imprudent to yield so soon; that some men would like her the worse for it; but that he thought it a certain sign that she would make a good wife, since, though he was in fault, she took more care of him than herself.

Marilla, guessing the grounds of his behaviour, heard this arrogant speech without once attempting to interrupt him: but he had no sooner concluded, than giving him a contemptuous look—
 'I am sorry, Sir,' said she, 'that you should put such a false construction upon my humanity. I thought your life, or, at least, your health, in danger; I followed the first dictates of pity; and, instead of diverting myself with your misfortunes, endeavoured all I was able to remove them; and hurried you hither, where I knew you could be supplied with necessaries till you received them from home. But such is the return that the least act of kindness meets with from narrow and selfish minds. Yet, I assure you, Sir, I am not sorry for the little I have done with an intent to serve you: it spreads no blush on my cheek, it gives no uneasiness to my heart. There is not a creature living that I would not have served with equal tenderness. But how could your vanity suggest such a motive for my endeavouring, without any hurt to myself, to serve the brother of Amelia, and a near relation to my sister Felicia? What a wretched heart must you have, while you can form no idea of generosity, humanity, or compassion, without the allay of a particular affection! I wish you well, I confess; and more so, as the happiness of a worthy fa-

mily is, in some degree, connected with yours: but, at the same time, I must be so plain as to tell you, that I neither do, nor ever can, love you. Your vices are an insurmountable obstacle. Your travels, which might have been of service to a man of sense and virtue, only serve to disgrace you, and display your ignorance and folly. Forgive me, Sir, I mean not to reflect on any involuntary imperfection; were you as kind to yourself as nature has been, you would be much more tolerable. But your debauchery, your boasted lewdness, and that impious custom of swearing, the unmannerly vice of a bully, must for ever exclude you from the affection of any woman who has sense, virtue, or true delicacy. Indeed, Sir, if you would be happy here, you must endeavour, at least, to copy your cousin Manly, and, like him, aspire to be happy hereafter. He, I dare say, enjoys more true delight from the reflections of his own mind, in one day, than you, with your boasted swing of pleasure, in the compass of a year.'—'Ay, than in the compass of an eternity,' cried my father, with an eagerness which could arise from nothing but a conviction founded on experience: 'I know it, Sir; feel it every day.'

I believe, Madam, you will think Marilla's reproof much kinder than my cousin's insolence deserved: she had, indeed, a favourable opportunity to humble his pride, and, by opening his eyes to his own follies, to lay an obligation on his whole family: to this point, then, she generously directed her views. Indeed, had she not treated him with such forcible severity, all she could say would have been useless. His mind is so extremely callous, that fine raillery, though ever so sharp, would not have hurt him.

The youth, struck with the ease of a conquest which he fancied he had too soon obtained, began already to think of my sister with indifference. His elbow was still on his knee, and his eyes, with the utmost confidence, fixed on hers: but she had hardly uttered three or four sentences, when surprize, vexation, and disappointment, appeared by turns on the stiff muscles of his unmeaning face, that was not at all formed to express his ideas; and yet these were wrought up in so strong a manner, as to give

give deformity to every feature: and at last, as if blasted by the indignant look of Virtue, he sighed, hung down his head, and sat abashed and confounded.

The bare idea of losing for ever, what he, just before, was ready to despise, made him almost distracted. His humility was now no less extravagant than his vanity before; it sunk even into meanness, and the most abject submissions: he rose, walked about the room, sat down again, wept, began to swear, and stopped short before the execration was finished; and, at last, after the solemnest protestations, that he never loved her a hundredth part so well as he did that moment, told her that he wished from the bottom of his heart that she had not a farthing in the world, or (to use his own elegant phrase) a smock to her back, that he might let her see his sincerity.

Marilla says, that it was impossible for her to avoid smiling, and instantly thanking him for his good wishes. As to my father, he burst into laughter: 'A fine speech truly!' said he; 'a most generous lover! So you would have her be a beggar, that you might force her to be miserable your own way? We are all greatly obliged to you.' My cousin endeavoured to vindicate himself; and after saying and unsaying, affirming and retracting, at last, with much hesitation and stammering, he made shift to declare, that he only meant to say, that he should be glad of an opportunity to convince her how very much he loved her.

But, Madam, I try your patience too much, as well as tire myself, in thus dwelling on circumstances that you may think beneath your notice. I shall only say, therefore, that by the time his servant had returned with linen and other cloaths from my aunt's, he began to be more reconciled to his fate; and, after having dressed himself afresh, took his leave with a tolerable grace. Not all the reasoning in the world could have made him so sensible of his folly, as this disappointment has done. Love seems to have refined his mind, and to have given a large scope to his understanding. He shuns his old companions; and, for the present at least, has thrown off his favourite vices. It has taught him the use of reflection; and, in short, if this reformation continues, we may have the happiness to see him have a just

to that respect and complacency which is ever due to the character of an honest man: a title the most significant, as it carries in itself the idea of intrinsic worth and excellence.

After all, a union between my cousin and Marilla would be extremely agreeable to me, could I be but once convinced of the sincerity of his reformation; since it would not only give a closer cement to the two families, but might happily confirm that virtue which has yet scarcely taken root. But why do I mention this? It is a thing altogether impracticable; she will not suffer me to speak of it; his want of sense is alone, in her esteem, an unsurmountable obstacle. The deficiency, she says, is on the wrong side; and she could never have a sincere esteem for a husband who was acknowledged by all her acquaintance to be greatly her inferior. And, indeed, I must confess that I think her in the right.

Lucius and I propose to meet you at Leicester. I sincerely wish you a safe and agreeable journey; and am, as you will ever find me when our friendship will be supported by a nearer intercourse, your ladyship's faithful friend,

FELICIA MANLY.

LETTER XLIX.

FROM CHARLOTTE TO LADY HARRIOT ***.

DEAR MADAM,

DID not I tell you, that I would not write till I could send you word how I liked my situation? Why then should you complain that I have not kept my word? I am in a new world; and three months is surely time little enough to form a judgment, where every thing I see, and every thing I hear, is as great a novelty as if I had been transported to some unknown region. Conceive, if you can, how surprizing it must be to me, who never beheld any thing but the splendors, or, as I now chuse to call them, the tedious ceremonies of a court, to meet with artless simplicity and plain-dressed truth, instead of polite flattery and high-strained compliments; and, in the room of every gaudy folly, to behold pure nature and white-robed innocence and felicity arising from a strict conformity to their dictates.

tates. But I believe, Madam, a particular account of my reception and manner of life will not be disagreeable. To begin, then.

As I intended to surprize them, by arriving an hour or two sooner than they expected, I was not above five miles from the end of my journey, when I was met by Mr. Manly and my friend. We had like to have passed by each other; but Felicia happily observing the coronets on my chariot, called me by my name. I gave them a look; their door flew open; and both Lucius and she were at mine before any of our fellows had time to dismount. I was surprized, I confess, at this piece of indecorum. 'O the dear hoyden!' cried I to myself, and the servants stared as if they were ashamed of their insignificancy. The eyes of both my friends sparkled with pleasure; their rapidity and eagerness soothed my friendship, while my heart fluttered, and said—'To follow nature is the height of good-breeding.' One of my servants presently opened the door of the chariot, when I could do no less than step out to embrace them. But I shall take no notice of the endearing compliments that passed between us. Felicia's cheeks were moistened with a tender testimony of her joy. I was compelled, by friendship, to leave my woman to ride alone, and to give them my company in their own coach, in which, in a kind of triumph, they carried me to the end of our journey.

We soon arrived at the house, a large plain edifice, situated in the midst of an earthly paradise, where I found an entertainment rather hospitable and friendly than profuse and magnificent. I was welcomed with the most obliging testimonies of joy; and as they concluded that I must be weary with my journey, I was early conducted to my apartment, the most sumptuous of any in the whole building; and though there is nothing like grandeur in the furniture, there is a neatness and elegance that at first engaged my attention: every thing is, like the owner's mind, plain and beautiful. Such was the idea Felicia had given of me to her few select friends, that, from the first moment, wherever I appeared I seemed to inspire joy; their hearts were as open as their houses, to receive me; and all of them actually strive who most shall contribute to make my residence in this delightful place as

agreeable as possible. But, after all, you can't imagine, Madam, what a rustick creature this Felicia is grown; why, she is such a walker, I can't keep pace with her half the length of a small field. I laugh at her activity, and mimic her country stride; while she, with the greatest good-humour, ridicules my mincing step, and endeavours to put me out of conceit with some little peculiarities, which she calls affectation. Mr. Manly has, indeed, every perfection that my lovely friend has attributed to him: believe me, he has nothing of the swain but simplicity, and an artless heart; nothing of the courtier, but the unaffected ease and freedom of his behaviour; and such an esteem I have already entertained for him, that I had rather hear him talk than listen to the compliments of the finest beau in Christendom. Nay, more, I love him; love him as I should my guardian angel, were I permitted to see his person, and hear his heavenly admonitions. If it should please the Director of all events to suffer me to be safely delivered of a boy, where shall I find a tutor like him? I would not, for the world, deny him the happiness of being brought up with his son. Should I live to see the image of my dear deceased lord growing up under his care, what a sweet addition would it give to my reveries! With what pleasing sympathy should Felicia and I behold the two prattling infants daddling before us through the garden or the fields; while we, with hearts filled to the brim with maternal love and social friendship, walk slowly after, talking of refined delights, and raising our souls on the wings of heavenly affection and gratitude! The little cherubim, when lying on Felicia's lap, puts me in mind of the Venus and infant Cupid I have so often admired in my uncle's closet. I need not tell you that he is a lovely boy, when I make use of this comparison; a comparison that would wrong him, if I did not add, that it only holds good while he sleeps; for, when awake, his bright blue eyes destroy the resemblance.

The first visit I paid was to Marilla, who is the same engaging creature that Felicia has always described her: she has a good deal of learning, a great deal of fine sense, and a vast deal of that tender humanity, that unlimited goodness of heart, which, uncircumbed by the ties of blood or the distinctions

of religion, grasps at the happiness of every human creature. In this she resembles Lucius, to whom she is nearer allied by a kindred soul than by all the ties of nature. He considers man as man, and himself as a citizen of the world; and they both regard the whole universe, however varied by the complexion of different regions, however distinguished by religions, customs, and manners, as having a reciprocal claim to benevolence, and the kindest acts of humanity. In this visit to Mr. Manly's, I was entertained with the same affection as if I too had been married into the family: Marilla received me with open arms; and the good lady, her mamma, expressed almost as much tenderness for me as for Felicia, or her own daughter; while my friend, smiling at their caresses, seemed to set a higher value on them than on those bestowed on herself. What a difference is there, Madam, between this frank behaviour, this unreserved freedom of mind, and all the low acts of disguise, the empty formalities, the modes and forms of greatness! The openness of their countenances made it impossible for me to be under the least restraint. In an hour's time I was as free and intimate with every one of them as Felicia herself; I told them I knew all their affairs, and enquired of Marilla, whether she was yet inclined to admit the addresses of Felicia's cousin? She reddened a little; but immediately repel'd, that was it possible for her to be in love with a vicious man, let his person and behaviour be ever so engaging, she would never admit of his addresses; since this would be to hazard both present and eternal happiness: that, in this case, it would be her duty to do violence to her heart, and, by a glorious effort, endeavour to conquer herself; how then could she ever think of being so nearly united to a man whom, though she would not despise, she could never love!

'But,' said Mr. Manly with a smile, 'my daughter has another motive to refuse him, which, notwithstanding the extraordinary frankness of her temper, she has had the art to conceal. A young clergyman, nearly related to Mr. Stevens, is lately returned into this part of the country, where he has

obtained a small living; but, though his circumstances are but very indifferent, he has every other qualification that can recommend him to my daughter. He was last week accidentally in her company; and I am informed that she has made a conquest which she cannot but approve. I had this information from Felicia's cousin, who makes a great merit of the discovery; and says, that though the clergyman despairs of ever obtaining her, and has declared that he shall never have the presumption to attempt it, yet, in his opinion, I ought to watch her close, lest she should be prevailed upon to throw herself away.'

During this speech, Marilla had a constraint and awkwardness in her air, which shewed her at a loss how to behave; but she was soon relieved by Felicia, who, after expressing some indignation against her cousin, asked if the gentleman was not educated at Cambridge. Mr. Manly answered, that he heard so. On which she told him, that she had once the honour of his company with Mr. Stevens, Lucius, her aunt, and Amelia, in a visit they paid at my *Lord M****s; that she was greatly pleased with his conversation, and believed him to be a gentleman of uncommon merit. It was easy to see that Marilla did not hear this encomium with indifference, though she had the presence of mind instantly to change the subject.

Marilla, who had yet, as she told us afterwards, no more than a high opinion of the merit of this reverend gentleman, an esteem which rather increased than disturbed the tranquillity of her mind, had soon a very favourable opportunity to see if it was worthily placed. She had no difficulties to encounter with; her father, and every one of the family, were devoted to her happiness. Mr. Manly, disgusted with the follies of life, rejoiced at the prospect of disposing of his daughter to a person of intrinsic worth; he only wanted to know if his information was well founded, and this he easily accomplished. He invited Mr. Stevens and the clergyman to dine with him; and blotting out the name of the young esquire, shewed them the letter as a mean attempt to injure them in his esteem. The modest clergyman, struck with confusion, trem-

* See Letter VIII.

bled, and confessed the truth; at the same time assuring him, with many protestations, that though it was true he loved Marilla, he never had the presumption to aspire to the least hope; and that, whatever had been the consequence, he had resolved never to mention it to her. But Mr. Manly interrupted him, by letting him know that he was not displeased; that he had a very great esteem for him; and though his daughter's fortune would be now very considerable, the disproportion could not be great, since he did not doubt, if virtue, piety, and good sense, would do, but that in time he would wear the mitre; and that, if he could gain his daughter's affection, he would be no obstacle to their union.

You must not expect, Madam, that I should here describe his rapture, or tell the wise and silly things he said and did. He was in a moment raised from despair almost to the possession of his highest wishes: if, then, he did not behave at this instant like a madman, or a fool, I should have no opinion either of his love or his wisdom. However, he was introduced to Marilla, who received him with the deference due to his merit: he saw her every day; and she every day becoming more sensible of his value, in about six weeks time they were married.

The young squire, though he had no great reason to hope, could not bear to lose the possibility of obtaining her, much less to see her in the possession of another; and, therefore, as if his reformation had been only a pretence, threw it aside, as being now of no service to him. He cursed her and himself; stormed like a madman; swore to abandon himself to every vice; went out, and got so drunk, that he was obliged to be carried home; and the next day was seized with a fever, from which he recovered with difficulty. The idea of the immediate approach of death filled his mind with horrors not to be expressed. Dreadful, indeed, were the conflicts of his despair; but these were at last removed by prayer and penitential tears; and, indeed, this sickness seems to have produced a real reformation. He is but just recovered, and may now live, and yet be no disgrace to his family; he may have a just claim to the complacency of his friends;

and may arise as high as his capacity will suffer him, to the degree of an honest husband, perhaps a plodding country squire, and a well-meaning justice of the quorum.

My whole attention is to contribute, by an easy cheerfulness and good-humour, to the satisfaction of a narrow circle of friends, and to furnish fresh matter for their amusement. It is their task to improve, mine only to divert. Marilla, who has not yet retired to her new habitation, graces our little society more frequently than before her marriage; and with her comes the agreeable youth who has the honour of her nearest friendship. I want words to express the height of their felicity: he, as well as Lucius and Felicia, is considered by Mr. and Mrs. Manly as the pride of their little family, as their happiness and glory. I hardly ever knew a man of finer sense or more generous sentiments; I could not have imagined that a person could be found so nearly resembling Lucius.

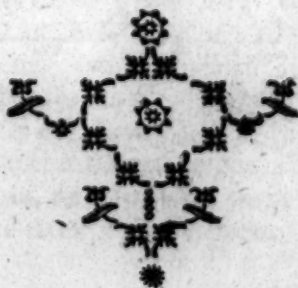
It is now, Madam, that I begin to live, to know myself, and to know the human mind, which in this place appears stripped of every disguise. True felicity dwells here; here is peace and joy. I taste the delight of the most sprightly and improving conversation; I read, I give a full scope to my reflections; and these employments alternately fill up my time. I sometimes venture to walk out alone, and, wrapt in sober contemplation, trace the hidden recesses of my own heart.

Would you believe it? I am grown a very enthusiast. I fall in raptures at the lovely face of nature. And were you to see me, when I walk in the garden, or in the adjacent fields; or when, to enlarge the landscape, I view from the turret the wide prospect stretching in a long level till it mingles with the clouds; were you, in these moments, to hear my rhapsodies, and be a witness of my extravagances; even you, with all your partiality for me, would be tempted to think me mad. But, perhaps, you are not far from thinking me so at present: however, it is best to conclude while I have room to assure you, that I have the honour to be your ladyship's most sincere friend,

CHARLOTTE.



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
MR. GEORGE EDWARDS,
A CREOLE.
BY SIR JOHN HILL.



L O N D O N:
Printed for HARRISON and Co. N° 18, Paternoster Row.
M DCC LXXXVIII.

THE
LITERARY
MR. GEORGE TOWARDS
A. C. R. H. F.



Printed for the Trustees of the British Museum, by the
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P R E F A C E.

IT has been too much a custom among the modern writers of romance, to expose persons instead of vices or follies; and to draw from real life the characters of a work, the very plan and intent of which bespeaks it fiction. Where the Author has been honest enough to avoid this; or where, from a more just idea of the nature of the thing he sets about, he has been under no temptation to fall into a procedure that has no real connection with it; the world has too often executed the ill-natured office for him, and has construed that into personal abuse which he intended as general admonition. In this case, the crime is theirs who apply, not his who has happened to write what was capable of application; as, indeed, every general censure must necessarily be more or less so, if founded on foibles that really exist.

Under these disadvantages, an Author who publishes a piece of this kind can do no more than enter his caveat against such treatment of his works. It is with great seriousness that the writer of these Adventures declares, that there is in the world no such person as the hero of them, or as any other character described in them. the persons are all, so far at least, Tom Jones's and Clarissa's. Resemblances there are, which may, perhaps, in some parts of them, in some degree fit certain particular persons; but they are intended as characters of various vices, follies, &c. and not as descriptions of particular persons.

In this light only the Author gives them to the world; declaring that he means no particular person by any of them, nor knows any person to whom any one of them can with justice be appropriated. After this, if any body chuses to apply them, or to charge all the foibles described under any of them on any private person who may happen to be possessed of some one of them, the censure ought to fall where the fault lies, that is, on him who forces the words into a sense the Author never intended to express by them.

V E R B A L

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the
City of New York, held at the City Hall, on the
10th day of January, 1901, the following
resolutions were adopted:
Resolved, That the Board of Directors
do hereby authorize the City Engineer
to prepare and submit to the Board
a report on the condition of the
City's water supply, and to
recommend such measures as may be
necessary to improve the same.
Resolved, That the Board of Directors
do hereby authorize the City Engineer
to prepare and submit to the Board
a report on the condition of the
City's sewerage system, and to
recommend such measures as may be
necessary to improve the same.
Resolved, That the Board of Directors
do hereby authorize the City Engineer
to prepare and submit to the Board
a report on the condition of the
City's fire department, and to
recommend such measures as may be
necessary to improve the same.
Resolved, That the Board of Directors
do hereby authorize the City Engineer
to prepare and submit to the Board
a report on the condition of the
City's police department, and to
recommend such measures as may be
necessary to improve the same.
Resolved, That the Board of Directors
do hereby authorize the City Engineer
to prepare and submit to the Board
a report on the condition of the
City's public works, and to
recommend such measures as may be
necessary to improve the same.
Resolved, That the Board of Directors
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to prepare and submit to the Board
a report on the condition of the
City's public buildings, and to
recommend such measures as may be
necessary to improve the same.
Resolved, That the Board of Directors
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to prepare and submit to the Board
a report on the condition of the
City's public parks, and to
recommend such measures as may be
necessary to improve the same.
Resolved, That the Board of Directors
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necessary to improve the same.
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City's public hospitals, and to
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necessary to improve the same.
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a report on the condition of the
City's public charities, and to
recommend such measures as may be
necessary to improve the same.

Witness my hand and the seal of the City of New York, this 10th day of January, 1901.

Mayor

City Clerk



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
MR. GEORGE EDWARDS,
A CREOLE.
BOOK THE FIRST.

CONTAINING ABOUT AS MUCH BUSINESS AS THE FIRST ACT OF A
COMEDY.

CHAP. I.

THE HISTORY OF A PERSON WHO
WILL BE OF USE TO US HERE-
AFTER.



WHETHER has had occasion to visit the lower part of Scotland Yard, must have observed an obscure door-way, long since divested of the apparatus with which it once was capable of being shut; and at present serving only to discover a dark passage, the nightly scene of many a tender courtship. At the extremity of this dusky entrance appears, behind the barrier of a spiked hatch, the triple-bolted gate of the very eminent and amiable Mr. Jeremy Edwards.

The apartment was originally destined to the service of one of the lower domesticks of the archbishop of Canterbury. It belonged to a sett of rooms of old allotted for the reception of that prelate and his retinue, if at any time the business of the Privy Council should detain him later at St. James's than the proper hours for his crossing the water.

The tranquillity of our country has now rendered late councils unnecessary; and the apartments, in less happy times appointed to such uses, have been a long while alienated from their original proprietor. The humble part of them, which is to be the scene of much business in the succeeding history, had been some years before given, by a person of fashion, to a discarded footman, whose unmannerly demand for wages my Lord had not been in a humour to comply with just at that time; and from this person, who had ventured to borrow on that fund, and the additional joint security of a neighbouring tradesman, about a twentieth part of the sum of our Mr. Edwards, the apartment, after the dismissing the friend to the Marshalsea, and obtaining an agreement of the repayment of the sum by weekly portions of one and sixpence each from the principal, devolved, by way of security, to the creditor.

Mr. Edwards, who was a man of great prudence and œconomy, found many reasons for being pleased with his new habitation. He grew so fond of it, indeed, after a few weeks, that he had

the generosity, in consideration of an assignment of it in form, together with another of a due proportion of the debt, from the noble donor, to acquit the principal in the obligation; and, at the same time, to release also his friend from the prison, on condition of his entering into the weekly engagement in the other's place, and bringing some responsible person to promise that he should keep up to his payments more regularly than the other had done.

That his habitation was situated within the verge of the court, a place privileged from the danger of arrests, could be, indeed, a circumstance of no consequence to Mr. Edwards; who, conscious that the advantage of buying with ready money was more than adequate to the highest interest, never made any debts: but he did not lose the consideration of it's being in a neighbourhood where almost every body wanted money so heartily as to be glad of it on any terms. Additionally to this, it's consisting only of one room rendered it less expensive in point of furniture; and the difficulty of finding the way to it gave him sufficient ground for hopes that his common acquaintance, if he had not yet been able entirely to get rid of such people, would not think it worth while to search him out there; and that only those, by whom he was to get something, would give him the trouble of opening his door for their admittance.

As the gentle reader is seldom content with an account of the life and actions of a great man, unless he is also informed of certain other less essential circumstances in regard to him, we shall comply so far with the custom established from time immemorial, by authors of the class to which we flatter ourselves this egregious work will declare we have the honour to belong, as to inform the world that Mr. Jeremy Edwards, the subject of our present relation, was a man of five feet, nine inches, and three quarters high; his age about sixty-seven; his person meagre; his countenance fallow, and deeply wrinkled; his eyes far sunk in their sockets, but carrying the constant marks of an uncommon scrutiny and discernment in them; and his beard a sable, silvered: it's colour, indeed, was usually more distinguishable on a Saturday than at other times, as on that day it was ordinarily about one third of an inch in length.

His habit was always mourning; that kind of dress, beside it's peculiar gravity, having the advantages of being bought cheapest at second-hand, and requiring the least expensive paraphernalia in sword, buckles, and the other common appendages. His wig was a tye, which, beside the advantage it enjoyed, in common with the coat, of gravity, and an appearance of importance without expence; by drawing the two tyes together in a knot under his chin at bed-time, very comfortably served in the place, and saved the expence of night-caps.

His meals were temperate, and were indeed one less in number than most people's; the physicians having persuaded him, as he had listened to their discourse at the coffee-house, that suppers were unwholesome. His hours were early, for he had long taught himself to cheat life of all that time which could not be enjoyed without the expence of fire and candle. His mornings were employed in looking over his accounts, and at his devotions; the Park took up his noon; and, from the time of his dinner to that of his retiring to his repose, he might be always found at Will's Coffee-house, where he got law from the loquacious Mr. Tongue as cheap as he did physick from the debates of the very eminent Dr. Greek and Dr. Crag; and where, after picking up the news of the day in the same manner, without joining in any conversation, he employed the rest of the tedious period in reading, one after another, all the daily and the weekly papers.

The coffee at these houses always gave him the head-ache; the tea, he observed, made him low-spirited; and, as for chocolate, he could never sleep after it: in consequence of this, he never drank any thing in this time but two glasses of water, which the waiters brought to him, without being called upon, at stated periods; and he paid quarterly at the bar, at the rate of three-pence halfpenny per week, for house-room.

The companion of this gentleman's retirement was a female of the name of Ruth, who had been taught to think she had great reason to applaud his tenderness for her, though she had no knowledge of what was her real connection with him.

Mrs. Ruth, who, at the period at which our history commences, was about six
and

and twenty, had been bred up under her master's eye from an infant. His acquaintance with her had commenced some time before her birth. Her mother, who unfortunately was never married, with how much justice we shall not pretend to say, had sworn the fruit of her unlawful amusements to him; and he had taken the child very early under his immediate protection, from a consideration that it was easy to maintain her at home, at a smaller expence than he must be at abroad for her; and that she might very soon be employed so as to make her rather a profit than an expence to him.

Upon this plan the little Ruth was very early instructed in the making cabbage-nets and purses: from thence she went through the whole round of employments since idly pretended to have been invented for the children of the Foundling Hospital; and was of so towardsly and industrious a disposition, that, by the age of seven years, she more than paid for her food and raiment. From that time she became serviceable to her guardian also in a farther capacity. He had been, till then, accustomed to pay one of the nymphs of the yard at the rate of five-pence weekly, for employing an hour every morning in the cleaning his apartment. The little Ruth now became able, at her leisure hours, to take off that expence; and, in fine, the old gentleman, whose temperate life had preserved to his late period that vigour which the modern polite world usually deplore the loss of at three-and-thirty, a few years after found means to place the gentle Ruth in the stead of the evening damsels of the Park, and to save himself the only three half-pences he had for many years been capable of accusing as extravagant and unnecessary.

CHAP. II.

IN THE STYLE AND MANNER,
THOUGH WITHOUT THE TERMS,
OF HERALDRY.

WRITERS in the Epick, whether in poetry or prose, have generally taken care to deduce the person whom they select for their hero from high and noble lineage. In antient days, when Gods were more numerous, as

well as more familiar, with the good people of this world, than men will be brought to believe they are at this time, an author hardly thought a man qualified to cut two or three people's throats, unless he had a deity, male or female, for his parent, or, at the farthest, for his ancestor. In after times, when the inhabitants of the upper regions made fewer visits among us, kings and emperors were still in being; and the author, if he could not find the way to deduce the principal in his story legitimately from one or other of these people, seldom or never failed of paying his mother's chastity the compliment of introducing somebody of this sort to the inmost recesses of it, just three quarters of a year before his birth.

There is great difference, however, between romance and history. The former, as it sets out in utter defiance of truth, and commonly of reason too, may make it's own way to the magnificent; the latter, as it is nothing, if not founded on facts, is tied down to much narrower limits.

All this we have judged necessary to prefix to our introducing the hero of this our history to the reader's acquaintance; as he was indeed a descendant of a family, of which the gentleman, a sketch of whose character has furnished out the preceding chapter, was not the least honourable branch.

The love of money, and the care to improve it, seem to have been hereditary virtues in the Mr. Jeremy Edwards already celebrated. His father, a person ever attached to it in the closest manner, had, in the course of his application, often fallen upon particular methods, which over-scrupulous people might have called exceptionable; and having, on one unlucky occasion, carried these a little too far, he subjected himself to a catastrophe which threatened to put a period to every hope of his succeeding in it again.

Mr. Thomas Edwards, for such was this gentleman's name, had been originally a foot-boy to an humble merchant in one of the dirty streets behind St. Paul's. This gentleman had received him so young from the country, that he either had very little idea of his parents or relations, or had the prudence to conceal who they were, by pretending so. The reader's curiosity, therefore, as to the origin of the family of the Edwards's,

though a very just and laudable one, must necessarily remain unsatisfied from this our history.

The fortunes of Mr. Thomas's master had been continually improving while he lived in his service, and his own had improved with them. From foot-boy he became at length butler; and, in this capacity, served till the age of thirty-six, at which period his master died, after having for some years spent a great part of his time at his villa near Highgate, and left the management of his affairs in town to his old and faithful servant. Mr. Thomas had so well profited of his confidence during the latter part of his service, that he now found himself worth three hundred pounds, beside a considerable legacy bequeathed him for his faithful services.

With this stock, amounting in the whole to five hundred and fifty pounds, he set up as a reputable trader. He had so well informed himself of all the common methods of gain during the period of his serving the maker of his fortune, that in a few years he raised his capital to five times it's original value, and was in a way to have made a very fair fortune, when having been unhappily discovered in promoting the stripping the house of a person of some consequence while the family were in the country, and buying the plunder at a fifth part of it's value, the catastrophe already hinted at very suddenly shifted the scene to one of his Majesty's plantations.

Previously to this unfortunate event, Mr. Edwards had been some years married; but as this alliance had not at all tended to the aggrandizing his fortune, or ennobling his progeny, we have not judged it necessary to take any more notice of it before, than the husband himself did afterwards. He had found means of sending this lady off with the greatest part of his fortune, some days before his trial, with instructions to follow him with it after his transportation, as he was well informed this must be the sentence; but, by some malevolent fate or other, he had the ill luck to find himself disappointed in this particular, and arrived in the colony he was destined to alone, and a beggar. After having served as long an apprenticeship in this new world to one mistress, as Jacob did for both his, he at length married her; and, finding means to get rid of her in

a year or two afterwards, he sat down, in the seventeenth year of his exile, master of a much better fortune than that he had left behind him.

The lady by whose death Mr. Edwards became possessed of this new establishment, had borne him a son during the last year of his servitude, an event which perhaps had not a little facilitated his more honourable engagements. From this son, who afterwards married the only daughter of a neighbouring planter, and by that means joined two very considerable estates which lay contiguous, descended Mr. George Edwards, the hero of our future story.

Mrs. Edwards, whom we have before mentioned as left in England, with injunctions of following her husband to his new place of residence, finding herself possessed of so considerable a fortune as two thousand pounds, had taken the advice of her friends, and resolved not to cross the salt seas after a husband who was little better than a rogue neither: she immediately threw herself into business, in a trade that has no other requisite but cash; namely, that of a pawnbroker; and though she did not think it safe to marry, as she could not be assured of her former husband's not returning, she very prudently took a spruce journeyman into her family, who transacted the business of her shop, and by whom she had a son, the Jeremy Edwards of our preceding chapter; for, having no legal title to his father's name, he was always called by that of his mother.

The improvement of money was a virtue derived therefore to Mr. Jeremy from his ancestors on every side: he no sooner was able to write, than he became of use in the shop; and by the age of fifteen was such a proficient in the business, that he was judged able to manage it entirely, under the direction of his mother; and, as that lady had now no farther service for her journeyman, the poor fellow was turned out of doors to starve, as the drones are from the hive by the rest of the bees, after they have laid the foundation for a succeeding generation; the only end for which the females of more species than the insect kind suppose those of the other sex to have been formed.

The mother of Mr. Jeremy lived to see him in his forty-eighth year; at which

which period she bid good-bye to this troublesome life, full of years and satisfaction, leaving her son in possession of the whole fortune; which when he had sold off the pledges, and got all together, he found amount to more than eight thousand pounds. With this stock he quitted the business he had been bred to, and retired to the cell in which the reader found him at the setting out of this history. He there found the way to make a profitable use of it, by lending money to people who, having no real security to leave for it, were obliged to be content with worse conditions as to interest, than those which the injudicious and censorious world call exorbitant, in the trade of the pawnbroker.

If thou shouldst imagine, gentle reader, that we have been somewhat perplexed and intricate in the conduct of this chapter, we are to remind thee that, while deducing genealogies, it becomes us to write like genealogists: and we give thee this notice in good time, to prevent surprize or censure, that thou shalt find, through the course of this our work, we will be dull, be obscure, be impertinent, be any thing in the world, rather than be out of character.

CHAP. III.

WHICH IF THE GENTLE READER
CMUSES TO CALL THE FIRST OF
THIS HISTORY, HE HAS OUR FREE
LEAVE.

MR. George Edwards, the son of Captain Nicholas Edwards, the descendant of the great Thomas Edwards, Esq; and allied by marriage to the family of Major James Williams, descendant of the honourable Colonel Williams, (for every man in these islands is as naturally a colonel as every German is a baron) was a fine tall boy, for a Creole very handsome, the immediate heir to an immense fortune; and was by every body allowed to be a gentleman of one of the best and antientest families in the island.

He was, at the period at which our history commences, barely nineteen: he had been bred at home with an indulgent mother, among a family of slaves, under the command of a father who had very little less pride, and much more

tyranny, than Alexander the Great; and he was accordingly as proud as peevish, and as insolent as indulgence and bad example could render him. He had, however, many amiable qualities at bottom: he was generous to profusion; so compassionate, that his but coming in the way of the punishment of a negro, was a certain reprieve to the wretch; and so naturally open and ingenuous in his disposition, that no consideration was ever able to make him deny, or even but disguise his thoughts.

It has been an observation of the moral writers who have not been for allowing too much merit to human nature, that many of our virtues are the produce of our pride. Certain it is, that this openness of temper in our hero was grounded on his holding himself too high for dissingenuity, and knowing his own rank too well to suppose there was any body he need condescend to conceal his thoughts from; but we are not able to discover that his ingenuity was less a virtue for this, or even that this pride was criminal. If every man would remember on all occasions his own rank; or, if he have none in civil life, the very dignity of his nature; it would prevent his descending to a thousand things that himself has occasion to be ashamed of, and his friends and acquaintance to be sorry for.

Among other it's good dispositions, the heart of Master George was very open to love: he was in a country where there were very few objects for such a passion, and where, unfortunately, there was one so much superior to the rest in person and accomplishments, and so vastly inferior to himself in point of fortune, that she at once rendered it impossible for a person of his turn either to think of any body else or of herself.

The young gentleman had struggled against a tenderness for this lady from a very early period of his life: but his pride, added to his father's frequent and earnest admonitions against it, had at length got the better of every thought that would have hurt his interest; when falling in one day at her father's plantation, on a familiar visit, he found the young lady in tears; the unlicked son of a neighbour planter soliciting her in very coarse, and hardly civil terms; and the father seconding his suit with the common threats and promises on these

these occasions of immediate beggary if he refused, and of his utmost penny if she would comply.

The common benevolence of our hero's temper would have led him to plead in the lady's favour on such an occasion, had he wanted another motive; but his own honour seemed, according to his high sense of it, to be in some degree also concerned in the case. Though he had never opened his lips to the lady on a love-story, he could not but look on this youngster as a sort of rival; and very justly condemning him as unworthy the woman he dared to solicit in such a manner, he told him, somewhat roughly, these were not the methods to gain a heart that was of any value, and that no hand was worth accepting without one. 'I applaud the lady's refusal of you,' continued he; 'and should do so though you had my fortune. And, Mr. Wentworth,' says he, addressing himself to the father, 'let me prevail with you to pardon Miss July, and dismiss her lover. You know nothing of her worth, Sir, if you imagine she can't command a better match than this at any time. Nay,' concluded he, with some earnestness, 'I'll tax my own estate with the price of all that follows, if you find reason to repent taking my advice.'

The father consented, and the lover had his final dismissal; while the young lady, who paid no more attention to that circumstance than to the compliments her father was making Master Edwards, threw herself at his feet; and seizing his hand with a rapturous eagerness, washed it with a profusion of those tears which he had intended not to provoke, but to dry up. It was some minutes before she spoke: at length—'O Sir!' says she, 'wherefore am I to be more undone by you than I could have been even by him? Why this additional claim to that esteem, that adoration, you had from me before? I would not tell you, that to have lived with him were less than to despair of you: I would not tell you this, but that I know to be what I am, and to despair of you, is but one thing.' Here a fresh torrent of distress interrupted her for some moments: at length, recovering her voice, and still eagerly pressing his hand—'Pardon,' says she, 'sweetest, greatest,

'perfectest of God's images! pardon a frankness my soul has learned from yours: I cannot dissemble with the man who, I see, esteems me, though he dares not love me: and, with the same truth with which I own this to you, I tell you,' concluded she, 'I would not listen to a passion that, while it made me blessed, would make you miserable.'

Our hero had stood, during this interesting period, motionless as a statue, with his eyes fixed upon the ground: the lady still retained her posture, but her head now sunk, through mere fatigue of soul, upon his hand; and the father stood at a little distance staring, and, with open mouth and vacant countenance, seeming at once to swallow the whole discourse, and digest no syllable of it. He was by much the most at ease of the three; and therefore it was natural enough that he should break the silence. 'I don't know what she means by all this outlandish talk, not I,' says he: 'tis what she reads, I suppose, out of the play-books your people a lent her. But you might take her off of her knees, howsomdever, one wou'd think, Squire, thof' you be so much above her.'

Certain it is, that neither had the lady recollected her own situation, nor he that she continued in it, till this admonition. He raised her with great tenderness; and, throwing his arms about her, imprinted on her cold lips a kiss that gave them life and warmth again: he looked earnestly on her; and, after a pause of some moments, uttered with great agitation of mind—'Would there were any thing proper for me to say to you!' And burst from her without ceremony.

The father stared after him for some time; and then, turning about, told his daughter peevishly—'A mote a said good by t'ye, dog, howsomdever, a body would think. Zw——s! what an he be so rich, you and I are Christians, sure, as well as he, an't we?' The girl was silent; she knew there were circumstances under which it were poor to descend to forms: she retired to repose a moment in her apartment; as the reader may also do, if he pleases, after so busy a scene, before we lead him into a new chapter.





CHAP. IV.

THE BUSINESS OF WHICH THE READER WANTS EITHER PENE- TRATION, OR A GOOD OPINION OF US, IF HE CANNOT GUESS WITHOUT OUR ASSISTANCE.

THOUGH our hero was sensible there was nothing for him to say to the lady, who had so frankly disclosed her heart to him, he knew full well that there was a person to whom he had much to declare on the subject. He immediately returned home; and, telling his father he had something of importance to say, retired with him to his closet.

'I have been, Sir,' says he, 'at our neighbour Wentworth's.' The father's colour changed at the name. 'I have prevented,' continues he, 'that brute of a parent from sacrificing his daughter to the arms of Will Stanley.'—'And what business—' the father was beginning to exclaim with great earnestness and vociferation. 'Sir,' says the son, 'with great sedateness, I begged you to hear me; if you refuse it, I have done.' The father, with some difficulty, bridled both his passion and his voice; and the youth proceeded—'There is not a thought in my heart that I would condescend to disguise even to you: I do not love the girl; I have already been at the pains of conquering the first attacks of that passion. As I do not love her, I am an unprejudiced judge in my own cause; and I confess to you, Sir, that I am so much convinced of the superiority of the qualifications she possesses to the advantages of fortune, that, if I can prevail with you to think in the same manner, I will marry her: without your approbation, I will never do either that, or any thing of consequence.'

'Thee art mad and bewitched, lad, for certain!' exclaims the father; 'they have put love-powder in thy punch, or some d—d trick o'that fashions! Marry a drabble-tail'd wench, without a half penny! Why, thee mayst marry a dutchess, boy! Thee must go to England, child, to look after a wife for thee; there's no body upon the island worthy to untie thy cravat.'

'Why, child, thee dost not know thyself! Call thee proud, quotha!'

To an infinite deal more matter of this kind, which made it's way from the good man in an unintermittible torrent, the youth very coolly answered—'I asked your approbation only, Sir; I know you are the best judge whether you ought to give it; and I am content with your refusal: you shall hear no more of this; nor will I think any more of it.'

The father shook him by the hand, told him he was an honest, good lad, and he wished he had ten times as much for his sake; and after bidding him, whatever he did, never demean himself in marriage, walked whistling away to his sugar-house. The youth took three or four hasty turns about the room, then sat down to the escrtoire, and wrote to the lady in the following terms.

'MADAM,

'I Left you abruptly an hour ago, because I had no right to propose to you what I knew another must determine for me. I have asked my father's permission to offer myself to you as a lover; he has refused it; and I shall never disobey him. I will not give you pain by picturing to you what I feel on this occasion; it is more friendly to tell you, that love is a passion you may conquer. It is long since I had got the entire mastery over a tenderness I much earlier conceived for you: this accident only revived those thoughts; and reflection, as it cannot warrant, will again subdue them.'

'If this has been possible, in regard to a passion that had you for it's object, doubt not but it will be easy to make any other fall to it. I am, Madam, your very obedient, humble servant,

'GEORGE EDWARDS.'

The lady had not imagined there would be such an application in her favour. She never felt the loss of her lover so severely as now that she knew how much he was so. She read his letter over and over: she saw the coldness of the stile was affected; but she honoured him for the affectation. 'O generous youth!' says she, 'thou knowest, indeed, the spirit

• spirit of this passion; thou disdainest
 • to employ a power thou hast to make
 • me wretched! But know, I must be
 • more miserable for that thou disdainest
 • to wish me so. In this only thou art
 • deceived, that thou supposest love may
 • be conquered. I know it not but for
 • thee; but, whilst thou art it's object,
 • coldness were as impossible as incon-
 • stancy!

After some more soliloquies of this kind, she threw herself upon the bed, refused comfort of all kinds, even food, and pined in two days into a very dangerous disorder.

The physician of the place (a man who had been an apothecary in London, till his idleness and debauchery, added to his ignorance, had ruined him there; and who, now in a new world, and with a new character, dispatched more to the shades than any ten of his former trade in England) did not find himself able to discover, by the symptoms, what the disease of the patient was; but every body about her joining in assuring him it was owing to love, he acquiesced in it. He very gravely told the father, that Galenical medicines would be of no efficacy in this case; for that Hippocrates, the father of physick, had left it among his writings, that—

‘ Amor nullis est medicabilis berbis; ’

and therefore chymical remedies were the only ones that could be proper, as being principally drawn from the mineral kingdom.

The father could not but submit to the opinion of a man so well acquainted with Hippocrates; and the daughter, though she saw she was doomed a sacrifice to the ignorance of her doctor, was indifferent enough about life to acquire the character of a sweet-tempered, tractable girl, that took her medicines as regularly as if they had been sweetmeats.

The only care of Miss July was, indeed, that Mr. Edwards should not know of her illness. She was sensible it would have the appearance of an artifice, which her soul was very much above; and though in so talking a place as that where she resided, where so little new presented itself at any time that a cut-finger was matter of news for a fortnight, it was impossible, for all her cautions and entreaties, absolutely to prevent it's reaching his ears: she contrived to throw people continually in his way, who were in-

structed to tell him they had just met her in the fields, or drank tea with her at home; so that, notwithstanding all the harangues of the doctor, he became convinced her indisposition was not of consequence enough to make either him or herself uneasy.

CHAP. V.

A TREATY SET ON FOOT BETWEEN THE FATHER OF OUR HERO AND UNCLE JEREMY. A VOYAGE TO ENGLAND.

PEOPLE who have but few relations, generally take sufficient pains, unless they are poor ones, to find them out. It was now many years since the father of our hero had traced back his genealogy so far as to know that he had a relation, as he called him, on the mother's side, somewhere in London. He had been at the pains of enquiring, by means of the masters of several vessels that traded backwards and forwards from their port to that of London, so far as to satisfy himself of this gentleman's existence and his circumstances, and had waited with christian patience the periods of many voyages for an explanation. He no sooner found, however, that he was in being, and was a close, rich fellow, than he wrote to him, with all the politeness a West Indian education could inspire, to give him an account of his family and affairs, and entreat an acquaintance with the only relation he had in the world.

Mr. Jeremy Edwards was as slow and as cautious in all his motions as the gentleman who had claimed kindred with him. It was seven months before he discovered whether the letter he received was of consequence enough to pay it's postage; and an equal period elapsed during the necessary enquiries, as to the situation and connections of the writer of it: circumstances which the judicious Jeremy never took a man's own word about.

At the end of this time, it appearing that Mr. Thomas Edwards had a fortune; that there was but one life between that fortune and the said Jeremy; and that a life, which, if he could get the owner of it to London, would not be worth above a year and a half's purchase; he wrote to his dear brother, as

he

he called him, to inform him of the joy it had been to him to receive his letter; adding, that himself was declining apace; and that he thought Providence had, in this occurrence, pointed out to him whom he should make the heir of the little Heaven had blessed him with; that he was rejoiced to hear how discreet and good a lad his nephew was; and that, as he never yet had known so near a relation, he extremely wished to have the happiness of seeing him before he died: concluding that, as London was the proper place for the education of a young man who was to make a figure in the world, he was not without hope of sometime giving him his blessing there.

Uncle Jeremy was, from the receipt of this letter, looked on as the patron of the rising branch of the family. The young gentleman was every where called his heir; and, as Fame never fails to expand her tidings in proportion to the space she carries them through, this certainty was, on that side the water, never calculated at less than a hundred and fifty thousand pounds addition to his fortune.

In this situation were the affairs of the family, when the young gentleman had proposed to his father the taking Miss Wentworth for a wife. Mr. Edwards's own circumstances were vastly superior to those of that lady's parent; but the addition expected from the uncle set the youth so infinitely above the level with such a family, that his father would have thought it as proper for a prince of the blood to marry a scullion, as for his son, and the heir of his brother, to condescend to look upon the daughter of a poor planter.

His utter disapprobation had put a final period to the lover's intentions; and the lady had reconciled it to herself to lose him, when our hero, having employed a young negro wench of the next plantation on some trivial message, and, almost accidentally, asked her at her return if she had seen her young mistress that day, found, by that unguarded innocent, that the doctor had given her over two days, and that his ignorance of her situation had been owing to her care of having it kept from him.

Young Edwards had a heart too sensible and too generous not to feel the present circumstance as it ought, as well as

too open and ingenuous to conceal its sentiments. He ran immediately to his father—'This generous young creature, Sir, is dying for me, and has industriously concealed it from my knowledge: if you have compassion or humanity—nay, if you have but justice—do not make me accessory to the death of one who loves me, and who, if you would judge disinterestedly, you would own more than deserves me. You say I must not marry her, because my fortune is immensely great, and hers is nothing; it is therefore, Sir, that I should marry her: less than what I shall have would be more than enough; and what could I, what ought my father to wish more, than to confer an obligation on one who has it in her power to return it a thousand fold, to make me happy for ever? Can I suffer her to die in misery, who wishes nothing but to make me live in happiness?'

'Why,' replies the father, 'as for your marrying her, George, for the matter of that, I should not be so much against it if I was sure as how she would die for certain within this day or two; for, so far as that goes, I would not wish her to die miserable, as you say, no more nor yourself: but as for that doctor, you know ever since I told me as how Dobbin was only lazy, and the poor thing died in the mill but three quarters of an hour afterwards, I'm resolved never to take his word about any soul's life or death again. Besides all that, women are deceitful, as every body knows; and, mahap, this is no more nor a trick; and she'll no sooner a got you fast, but she'll jump out a bed, and tell you as how she'll live to make your heart ache.'

'Sir,' replies the youth, with great earnestness, 'I have promised to obey you; you cannot ask more of me: but I will not hear an unhappy creature, one whom I have made so, treated with this cruelty, while she is dying for me.' He was going on with great impetuosity, when the old man stopped him, by telling him they had things of more consequence to talk about. 'Captain Jer-vas,' says he, 'sails o' Tuesday: you know well enough how much your uncle Jeremy has longed to see you; now's your time to go. There's no-
C thing

‘ thing in the varfal world fo good as a
 ‘ voyage to England to cure a love-fit :
 ‘ belides, if you defign to make a man
 ‘ of yourfelf, now’s your time, while
 ‘ you are young, to do it.’

The youth itarted at the propofal; but the father infifted on his compliance. His unwillingnefs, the fource of which it was very eafy to fee, made the father the more refolute. An implicit obedience to a parent’s authority was one of the fixed principles in the mind of this generous youth: inconfquence of this, he fubmitted to the cruel fentence that was now paffed upon him; and, from mere compaffion both to himfelf and the lady, avoided fo tender and diftreffful a fcene as taking leave of her. Exclusively of what himfelf muft have felt from it, he confidered that the fhock might deftroy a perfon of her weak frame in her prefent fituation; and, as the fentence of his father was irrevocable, that it could produce no good to either.

CHAP. VI.

OUR HERO JOINED BY A COMPANION WHOM HE NEITHER KNEW NOR EXPECTED.

MR. Wentworth, the father of the unhappy July, had a brother, a man of great worth and honour, who had ferved in the army many years. He had diftinguifhed himfelf at the affair of Dettingen, and had been found among the dead on the fatal field of Prefton-Pans; not fallen, like the ftagglers of that unhappy day, alone, and with his heels neareft the fcene of action, but, like the Roman Catiline, *longe a fuis*, far from his own people, covered over with wounds, and in the midft of the flaughtered ranks of the enemy.

Deeds worthy of reward often meet with it, while they feem to difdain it. An officer among our own butchered troops might poffibly have been left dying many days with lefs hurts; but the commander of the oppofite handful, whofe heart, however unjuftifiable his enterprize had been, was full of honour and compaffion, no fooner faw, among the largeft flaughter of his friends, an enemy yet breathing under fuch accumulated means of death, than he ordered his own furgeons to attend him: in fine, he faw

him cured; offered him his own conditions, if he would engage in his caufe; and, when he found his loyalty to his fovereign unfhaken, gave him his liberty; telling him—‘ You are my —, though you will not be my friend. I think myfelf happy in having pre- ferved a life fo valuable, though it be to fight againft me.’ The prifoner took his leave with a heart, though unalterable in it’s principles, yet pierced with the fense of his preferver’s virtues. He determined to change the fcene of his fervices, that he might not lift his arm immediately againft the perfon to whom he owed his life. He quitted the regiment he was at that time in; and, turning his whole fortune into cash, raifed a company at his own expence, and embarked with them on the American fervice.

Mr. Wentworth was lefs fucceffful in this generous attempt than he deferved to have been: he had the misfortune to find a peace proclaimed before he came to the deftined fcene of his operations. He difbanded his company; and, having no bufinefs in England but the folliciting fome employ as a reward for his intended fervices, he trusted that to his friends, while he remained in Nova Scotia. After receiving repeated refusals, he retired to his brother’s plantation, out of humour with the world, and determined to have no farther communication with it.

The brave and virtuous naturally love thofe who are like themfelves. This gentleman, though he had lived now three months with his brother, had fhut himfelf up with a few favourite books, and had made a point of it to be private and fecret. His brother was not qualified to profit by, or join in, his converfation: they met only at meals, and only fuch of thofe as no other company were prefent at; and it was fcarcely known that there was any body befide the ufual family in the houfe by any of the ifland.

Though Mr. Wentworth had defpifed and avoided the company of his brother, it was much otherwife, however, with regard to his charming daughter. Juliet had been the companion of many of his retired hours. She had become enamoured of his virtues, even from his own modelt accounts of the incidents under which they had come in action; and,

and, in return, had made him the confident of her amour, if her situation with young Edwards could be called such.

He had entertained the highest notions of that young gentleman's gallantry and honour, from her accounts of the short scenes in which he had been concerned with her; and his whole conduct, as related by others, so perfectly agreed with the character she had given him, that he loved him, though he had not yet seen him, little less than the poor girl, who now despaired of him.

Mr. Wentworth communicated to his niece his resolution of going over to England with him. She was charmed with the thought of having, by this means, if she should live, an opportunity of continually hearing of her lover; and was not a little pleased with the thought of his having a man who so well knew the world near him, in the scene of temptation he was launching into.

Mr. Wentworth took his last instructions from the unhappy July, which he engaged his honour to adhere punctually to; and, borrowing a small sum of his brother, embarked that night in the same vessel with our hero. He had, immediately on his setting foot on board the vessel, enquired after Mr. Edwards; and no sooner saw it under sail, than he informed him, with much preparation, that Miss Juliet Wentworth was dead.

The tears our hero shed on that occasion endeared him to his new friend for ever. People less calculated for being happy with one another, would have contracted a familiarity from a necessity of being several weeks together; but these made a friendship that never afterwards was dissolved.

CHAP. VII.

A MEETING OF OUR HERO WITH HIS UNCLE—HIS FRIEND IS REDUCED TO A VERY UNLUCKY PERPLEXITY.

THE West Indies, to people who do not game, is a place of very moderate expence: the utmost a man's friends expect of him, is to make them drunk as often as they come to see him; and that, as well there as here, is to be done on very moderate conditions. The father of our hero had furnished him, on

his departure, with bills to the amount of five hundred pounds sterling, with which he thought he might make a very good figure for the seven months he intended he should stay in London: he had given him, however, a general order on his correspondents, in case of deficiencies, and an unlimited bill of credit on his uncle Jeremy. To this gentleman's care he recommended him in a very pressing manner; telling him, that it was altogether upon his account that he sent him over, as he had expressed such a great desire to see him; and adding, that if the money he had given him was not sufficient to maintain him like his son, he desired he would advance whatever was proper, and that he would answer his bills, on demand, to the amount of it.

Uncle Jeremy received this letter and his nephew together, at Will's Coffee-house, as he was one evening enjoying the smell of chocolate, and pouring down his water, together with the effluvia of that richer liquor, as the boys, on any occasion, opened the pots. The young gentleman, after an easy voyage, had arrived that afternoon in London, with his friend, who now, with much complaisance, presented him to the old gentleman, and told him how much his brother entrusted to his care when he committed his so beloved son to him.

The old gentleman, to avoid mistakes, read the letter his nephew presented to him, before he uttered a single syllable: he then, putting on his spectacles, and raising the youth's face by putting his hand under his chin, told him he was a very comely lad, and had the family-face; for that, if he knew any thing of his own features, he was very like him; and immediately after turning to his companion—'But pray, Sir,' says he, 'who may you be? for I don't read any thing about you in the letter.'

This abrupt question, while it a good deal shocked the natural politeness of the young gentleman, plunged the person to whom it was addressed into an almost inextricable difficulty: to acknowledge who he was, were to have disconcerted his whole future plan; and he had not, during the whole voyage, recollected, that though the young gentleman had never questioned him farther in any thing than he chose, this was a query very natural to have come from

somebody else, though he had no right to have expected it, perhaps, quite so early. He hesitated a few moments, and then answered, that his name was Spence; that he was an acquaintance of his brother's, and had come over in the same ship with the young gentleman.

'Sir,' says the old fellow; very sourly, 'I must needs tell you, that I think you are not a great deal better than you should be: and I shall desire my nephew to shake off all such acquaintances; the sooner the better. There can't be much good, I am sure, in a man who is afraid to tell his name when he is asked it. As for your knowing his father, I don't hear any thing about it: nephew, tell me the truth, did you ever see him there? And as to your coming over in the same ship with him, and therefore pretending to be acquainted, in my mind it is much like a man that came here some years ago to borrow forty pounds of me, because we had once dined at the same chophouse together.'

The nephew having made no answer to the interrogatory put to him in the midst of the preceding sentence, the old gentleman repeated it with some vehemence, charging him, as he valued his friendship, to tell him the truth. 'Sir,' replied our hero, 'I will never do otherwise: I do not know that this gentleman is acquainted with my father; but, Sir, I know him, and I have reason to love and honour him, as I am sure you will do, when you know him, too.'—'Yes, I believe I shall, when I know him,' replies the old man with a sneer of self-applauded cunning. 'You are a child, and have seen nothing of the world: come, confess the truth to me; did you ever see him yourself before you met aboard the vessel? or do you know any body that belongs to him?' To these unlucky questions the youth was obliged to answer also in the negative; and the old fellow continued—

'Aye, aye, I see it at once. You don't find out yet, I suppose, nephew, that this fellow has been lurking all this while about you, to devour you: you own you did not know any thing of him till he came aboard; and I dare say, if the truth were out, he never

'came there neither till the vessel was in the river. Aye, aye, you're a goodly one, I warrant you!' says he, addressing himself to the suspected person. 'You had better get away while you are well, for fear somebody here should know you better than you desire presently. A gang of them, nephew,' continued he, 'a gang of them, a pack of Irish sharpers, that watch about the vessels as they come in, just as the bawds and recruiting serjeants do about the country waggons, to kidnap every raw thing that comes in their way.'

Mr. Spence, as we shall, according to his own declaration, hereafter call that gentleman in this history; was all this while taking short turns about the coffee-house, biting his lips, and changing colour ten times in a minute. He was rather vexed with the circumstances of the old man's mistake, than angry at the consequences of it; and was cursing Fortune very heartily for involving him in a difficulty that he had a right to be cleared of, though she had denied him the means of it. The old fellow saw all his confusion, and attributed it to guilt. 'You see, nephew,' says he, 'how mad he is that he is found out: I found he was a liar.'

This was too much for the patience of the accused: though he had borne the heaviest imputations with temper, Liar was a word there was no swallowing. 'Sir,' says he, going up to the uncle with great severity of countenance, 'I hardly blame you for your suspicions. I own, appearances are against me. I believe a love for your nephew, not an enmity to me, who am a stranger to you, has been your motive, and I esteem you for it: but, Sir, only appearances are against me; and, till I have satisfied you of this, I beg no more such harsh words may be used in regard to me.' The uncle told him, there should no farther words at all pass between them, for that he should insist upon his nephew's having no farther acquaintance with him: 'and as to myself, Sir,' says he, 'I believe I know the world too well for you.' So saying, he took his nephew by the arm, and led him away, without giving him an opportunity of so much as speaking to his suspected acquaintance.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

MR. EDWARDS PUTS HIMSELF UNDER THE CARE OF HIS UNCLE. HIS FRIEND IS NOT TREATED QUITE SO WELL AS HE DESERVES.

THE conversation recorded in the preceding chapter had passed at a time when the coffee-house was full of company. The eyes of every body were upon Mr. Spence, as he was now left alone in the room; and as people are naturally inquisitive about every stranger who mixes himself among them, and are ever ready to believe the worst that can be said of him, they all agreed that the old gentleman had reason for every thing he had said. Some rejoiced in the poor young fellow's escape; some observed that he had it all strong upon him; and one of the company insisted upon it, that he had seen him fifty times with Mac-lane. Mr. Spence, full of the vexation of so unexpected, so unmerited a censure, as he saw he now lay under on all hands, threw himself upon one of the benches, and was pressing his forehead with his left hand as he leaned upon it; when, in consequence of one of the company's whispering something to the woman of the house, he found none of the boys would stir to bring him any thing he called for. He took care to assure himself of the truth of this, by giving his orders to two or three of the waiters separately; and at length enquiring the cause of their neglect at the bar, when he had heard it, he walked deliberately to the upper end of the room, directing his eyes alternately to the company on both sides, and speaking very composedly and deliberately—'Gentlemen, which of you is it that supposes me not proper company for him at a coffee-house?' No answer was made to this as he went up the room; and, after the same ceremony in passing back again, he said to the lady at the bar—'Madam, you find you was mistaken: let me have a dish of coffee.'

If this circumstance had thoroughly ruffled him, his temper was put to a much severer trial a few minutes after; a porter, while he was drinking his coffee, delivering him the following letter.

'SIR,
' I Am greatly concerned at the unworthy treatment you received from my uncle a few minutes since. I need not tell you, that his suspicions have no weight with me; but, as my father has made me accountable to him for my conduct, you will not blame me that, till you have convinced him of his error, which I know you can easily do, I pay the respect I am commanded to his admonitions, and am not upon the footing I have been used to be, and wish ever to be, with you.
' Many things I have occasionally said, have, I believe, given you reason to depend upon my friendship. I must be a villain to leave you deprived of it's assistance, just on your arrival, when you are possibly unprepared for so improbable an event. It is to wipe off so black a stain from my own character, that I take the liberty of inclosing a bill for a hundred pounds to you; and of assuring you, at the same time, that there is nothing you may not at all times command, that is in the power of, Sir, your most obliged, and most obedient humble servant,
' GEORGE EDWARDS.'

Had the money been immediately necessary to Mr. Spence, he would not have willingly accepted it on such conditions. He endeavoured to return it, but found the youth had made every attempt of that kind impracticable. The oftener he read the letter, the more reason he saw to acquit the young man of any fault toward him: he saw that he behaved as he ought, though at the expence of no little pain to himself; and, for his own part, he could only curse the malicious perplexity that attended his fortune.

Uncle Jeremy could have been well content to have received more timely notice of the arrival of his nephew: for the present, however, to prevent his falling into ill hands, he had taken him to his lodgings; and, with many apologies for the meanness of the accommodation, put him into his own bed, promising to find a proper apartment for him the next day; and borrowing, for that night, the bed of a servant then in the country, who had chambers over him, for himself and the partner of his joys.

The

The young gentleman, who had not lain still for some weeks before, slept pretty soundly in his new lodging, in defiance of a considerable number of acquaintance that had picked him up there. As to the uncle, his head was too full of the advantages he intended to make of his nephew, to suffer him once so much as to close his eyes, or to remember that the blooming Ruth was beside him. For the result of his projects, the gentle read-

er must, however, begin his attack upon the second book of this our history.

We have brought our hero from the new world to the old, or, to speak more appropriately to his own circumstance, from the old world to a new one—pardon us geographers, if, in justification of this new phrase, we affirm that we verily believe one of these worlds, as they are called, to be as old as the other—and here we close the first book.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

THE



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
MR. GEORGE EDWARDS,
A CREOLE.
BOOK THE SECOND.
IN WHICH OUR HERO COMMENCES A MAN OF PLEASURE.

CHAP. I.

A COFFEE-HOUSE ACQUAINTANCE
OFFERS HIS SERVICES TO MR.
EDWARDS.



R. Jeremy Edwards, with whose midnight meditations we closed the preceding book, summed up the whole toward morning, in the two following propositions: that a young Creole, who comes to England for education, is the bubble of every one who has the least talent at cheating; and that, if a man is to be stripped, the money had better fall into the hands of his own family, than among strangers. In consequence of this, he determined to have as much as possible of the advantages of his nephew's destruction to himself; and another reason, which the reader may possibly guess at, made him resolve that the profit of it should be as great as it could. The youth, he imagined, shewed a very happy genius for being imposed on: the apparent openness of his temper seemed to prove this; and the unlimited bill of credit his father had given him, satisfied

the usurer, that it was but at the expence of a quarrel with that gentleman that he might strip him of half his fortune.

It has been observed, that there is no species of news which does not enlarge in proportion to the space through which it is carried; and it may be added, that no article of news is sure to receive so very considerable increase in it's travels, as that which relates to a man's fortune: if a person's estate be within twenty miles of London, two hundred pounds a year hardly gives him the credit of five; if it be situated in Yorkshire, the same capital naturally rises to eight; and, if in Cornwall, not a knight of the Land's End but makes it fifteen hundred, and as good land as ever crow flew over: from Ireland, no man of any degree of figure ever arrived with less than an estate of five and twenty hundred pounds a year; and the general allowance to the West Indies is twelve thousand; or, in a good year for sugar, twice as much.

The hero of our story, who had met with the fame of his uncle's fortune increased in this proportion in America, found his father's was not without the common advantage in England: he determined,

remained, to give himself the better figure, to take up the credit of both at the distant account; and, accordingly, every corner of Will's Coffee-house heard, the next morning, that the young fellow they had seen with the old usurer there over night, was worth twelve thousand pounds a year, and a hundred and fifty thousand pounds in ready money. The news had not spread to the Exchange, before it was affirmed, that every plantation upon the spot was mortgaged to him; and, at St. James's Coffee-house, every body was convinced of his being come over with an intent to purchase the island.

He no sooner entered Will's the following day, than every man who had but sat upon the same bench with his uncle for the last fortnight begged to be introduced to his acquaintance. Signor Squalli whispered the old fellow, that he was confident he read a taste for musick in his countenance: Mr. Pair'em begged to know whether he was engaged as to matrimony, for that he was daily applied to by women, from a hundred to a hundred and fifty thousand, to look out prudential matches for them; and the humble Mr. Stanza, after hinting at some little merit in his monody on the death of the Prince of Wales, entreated to know, whether a congratulatory address to the young gentleman on his arrival in England, with some proper honours to his family, might not prove agreeable?

While all these were attacking the old gentleman at once, as if every one intended to have a separate limb of him, a tall, raw-bon'd, ill-made fellow, in a velvet coat of two colours, and with the address of a chairman, made up to the youth himself: 'Sir,' says he, 'me be de *fair Connoitre*, de *Guardien*, de what me verily believe you call in English de *Pimpe*. Me be ver well wid all de demireps of dis place, and me can introduce the Chevalier sans Peine to dem all round. My face, Monsieur, may be your security, that me no rival those who do me de great honour to employe me.'

Monsieur le *Guardien* was going on very earnestly, when the old man, who had by this time got rid of his new friends, seized the youth by the arm with great violence, and paid no sort of regard to the *sacre Dieu! quel Bête!* of the foreigner, as he hawl'd him out of

the room. He soon saw there was no way of keeping his nephew long to himself; and he determined to make the best use of the short opportunity he saw before him. He hurried him home with all possible expedition; and told him it was by no means proper he should appear in publick till he was properly lodged and habited, and that he would immediately take the proper measures in regard to both those articles.

CHAP. II.

PREPARATIONS MADE BY UNCLE JEREMY FOR OUR HERO'S MAKING A FIGURE.

IN a corner of one of the worst squares in town, there stand, and indeed hardly stand, two houses, which seem to have been the habitations of the grandfathers of the people who built the rest of the square: these, half an age ago, fell into the hands of the ground-landlord; but his finances neither suffering him to rebuild nor repair them, they had added eleven years and a half to their antiquity, in an entirely useless state, when an enterprising son of Mammon, who had long before quitted the occupation of a butcher, to rival people of fifty other trades by underselling them, made his applications to the unhappy proprietor, as he was one day mournfully meditating under their windows, and purchased them of him at a rate at which he could not possibly be a loser, unless somebody could have contrived to annihilate the materials.

Uncle Jeremy had, by accident, heard the circumstances of this bargain, not without much regret that it had not been his own instead of this universal interloper's, whom some strong reports, in regard to his connections with Lord Squander and young Dash, had rendered much to be suspected of changing his varied trade into the single, profitable branch, at this time almost solely occupied by the said Jeremy.

These, and some other motives which we are ashamed to confess we believe had their origin from envy at the renegade butcher's success in the world, determined Jeremy to visit these houses; and, at the same time that he made a cheap purchase, to draw in the present proprietor to an ill bargain, if possible, by

by means of the very artifices by which himself had the advantage of the rest of the world.

One of the houses was already sold to a gentleman of great fame, whose knowledge, it appeared by this instance, however, consisted more in old words than in old houses. The other Mr. Edwards entered immediately into treaty about; and informing the metamorphosed butcher that he knew the price he had bought them at, and dropping at the same time a casual hint that the house he was about to purchase must be *furnished*, he obtained it at the very price at which it had been purchased of the late proprietor; and hardly suffered the person who sold it him to make two hundred and eighty per cent. of his money by both bargains.

Mr. Edwards, though he did not pay quite two hundred pounds for this bargain, immediately entered it in his account, a large house in **** Square, bought at one thousand four hundred and sixty pounds. **** Square, he considered, had a very good sound; and a large house, in a square in a polite end of the town, he knew his brother could not think dear at that price. All he had to take care of was, the not suffering it to be sold again till they had settled their accounts; and this he knew it was his own fault if he permitted.

From the seat of this purchase it was but a short walk to Monmouth Street. The provident old gentleman entered every open door in the row, that is, every door in it; and, after taking notes of what he found to his purpose in each shop, he came back to that where he had met with most old-fashioned finery; and, agreeing for two full-laced suits that had been worn at the last coronation but one, he ordered the lace to be taken off from each, and cleaned; bought a cheap cloth in the shop for the new trimming with this finery; and immediately sent the foreman of the shop to measure his nephew for two new suits, agreeing with the master to make up the two that he had stripped for his own wear into the bargain.

Mr. Jeremy Edwards was an enemy to all bills; and, of all the bills in the world, to those of tailors. He had purchased the two rich suits outright; he now bargained for the materials and workmanship of the new, in his usual way; and, in fine, after paying twenty-

seven pounds for the two, to be delivered compleat the next evening, and charging them in his account under the title of two very rich laced suits, one hundred and forty pounds, he closed his book; and his countenance declared a sufficient applause at his address and economy.

Though the profits of the day's expedition were already considerably greater than he had ever made in a twelvemonth before, it was a day of too much business for him to go home with so little of it done. He picked up the first upholsterer whose shop he passed by; and, taking him to the house he had just come into possession of, began talking with him of the furniture of the first floor. This part of the house, which he prudently considered was all that people ever were to see, he determined to set out handsomely; as to the rest, he had more frugal thoughts about it.

The man of whom Mr. Edwards had made the purchase, was informed, by the person who opened the door to him, that he had just carried in their neighbour, Mr. Settee, with him. The enraged butcher followed with the utmost expedition; and just entered the room as his rival Settee, who had been punctually informed of the circumstances of the intended furniture, and had been told that, if he did not set it at the lowest living price, another would be employed to do it, had delivered his estimate at three hundred and eighty pounds. There was an additional circumstance to all the admonitions which Mr. Edwards had given Settee as to the lowness of price, which operated not a little in his cause: this tradesman and his neighbour had long been envious rivals of each other's growing business; and the pride of being employed in the very house of his arch-enemy, had now spirited up Settee to engage in the furnishing this apartment at a price at which himself must, in reality, have been a loser.

The late owner of the house, who had a little recovered his breath while the other was delivering his estimate, now told Mr. Edwards, that he thought he hardly used him fairly; that he had sold him the house, as he very well knew, at no profit, entirely on the prospect of furnishing it; that——He was going on at this rate, with a volubility and vociferation that would have been trou-

blesome enough, when Mr. Edwards very mildly checked him in this manner: 'I believe, Mr. ****, that you really did let me into the house cheap, to make yourself amends in the furnishing it. But, Sir, why all this passion? 'Tis only the first floor, not the whole house, that we are talking about. I am engaged in honour to make my nephew's money go as far as it can; and this gentleman, I believe, has answered the recommendation I had of him from my cousin Spare; and I really think has set the things so low, that no man, to have a living profit, could make them cheaper.'

Settee insisted on it that he had done this; and his rival hinted that he did not believe it. They grew warm apace; and a quarrel would certainly have ensued in a few minutes, that many people who had hated the quondam botcher as heartily as Edwards did, would have had sufficient entertainment in. His gratifications, however, were of a more rational kind. He saw he could make an advantage of their passions, by employing them against one another; and, instead of fomenting the dispute in the way it was going into, he said, very coolly—'Gentlemen, the period of this dispute, at present, portends no good to either of you: I am sorry that I have been the occasion of it, and I beg I may put an amicable end to it. Mr. Settee,' continued he, 'I am certain you have made your estimate so moderate, that no man can underwork you: let your neighbour see the list of particulars, and declare upon his honour whether he can furnish them cheaper; if not, why he can't blame me for taking care of money that is not my own; and you may finish with all expedition.'

Settee, who knew the terms he had computed upon, consented to this with an air of great triumph; telling Mr. Edwards—'You will now see, Sir, in how fair a manner I have dealt with you; since even this rival in the business, as vexed as he is to lose the job, won't pretend I have over-rated any article.'

Though Settee was well enough acquainted with his own reasons, he was mistaken in thinking he could see deep enough into his antagonist's, to be sure of success in this incident. It is true

that this gentleman found every article in the account charged under the intrinsic value; but, considering that he had still the furniture of twelve rooms, by which he might make himself amends for any injury he should do himself in regard to these, he very boldly told Settee—'Sir, I know you depend upon my honour in this case, and will make a raving about betraying the secrets of the trade upon my speaking; but, Sir, I shall not see my friend's pocket picked upon any consideration whatsoever. Mr. Edwards,' continued he, 'you shall see how conscientious a dealer that gentleman is in a minute, Sir—I will engage to do this for a hundred pounds less than he offers it at.' Mr. Edwards, who protested he understood not these affairs, could say nothing to this but offer the alternative to Mr. Settee of taking the job on these terms, or leaving it. On his declining it, with some very harsh words to his antagonist, he told him he was sorry for the trouble he had given him in coming; and, leaving the other to lose about a hundred and thirty pounds, with all possible expedition he bought the furniture for the rest of the house in his way home through Knaves Acre.

CHAP. III.

CONTAINING A LOVE-LETTER AND
A PORTRAIT OF THE FIRST JEWEL
IN THE CREATION.

OUR hero, during the absence of his uncle on these important occasions, had made a short excursion from his lodgings: he had ventured as far as Westminster Bridge one way, and to Charing Cross the other. This was indeed against the express commands of Mr. Jeremy; and possibly he would not have ventured to do it, had not Mr. Le Gardien been accidentally walking at a little distance from the door, as he had opened it, half determined, and half afraid, to look a little about him.

This good-natured gentleman immediately offered his service: he gave him a taste of the wine at Stevenson's; explained to him the beauties of the equestrian statue at the other extremity of his journey; and, in their way back, led him into the best shop in town to buy his toothpicks and lavender water.

Our

Our hero was by no means satisfied with the behaviour of his companion; his civilities were too forced, his offers of friendship and service too exaggerated, and his whole manner too distant from what his habit bespoke him, to gain him any credit with a man of his judgment: he made him a cool compliment as he turned in at the gate, and took his leave without any desire of renewing the acquaintance.

The young gentleman had got home before his uncle, and was making some formidable attacks upon the virtue of Mrs. Ruth, when a porter delivered into the hands of that fair-one, as she attended his summons from the door, a square piece of painted paper, which was so very unlike every thing she had seen before, that she was preparing to lay it by with the utmost care till the return of her master. The interruption of the lover's attack had only given new vigour to it; he was seizing on her swelling breast, and about to rifle ten thousand charms at once, when he discovered on this paper, in the midst of a crowd of painted Cupids, bleeding hearts, and suppliant Venus's, the name of—Edwards, Jun. Esq. ushered in with the title of the Honourable.

He seized upon the letter with great eagerness; and whether it was that he recollected he could have Ruth at any time, or that one passion naturally falls before another in the human breast, he left the ruffled damsel, we should have said, to adjust her tucker, if she had worn any such ornament; and hastily opening the seal of this French case, dropped a folded paper out of it. When he had opened this, he found it ornamented with a margin full of the same emblematick figures that were on the cover; and in the space within that enchanting verge it contained the following address, written in a very small and not very plain hand, and in lines of different lengths and distances—

' The rose and lily dwell upon thy cheek,
' And in those eyes doth every virtue speak.
' Thy shape like *Harkilus* thy strength declares;
' And every part the stamp of manhood bears.
' To see thee and to love thee is the same,
' And who is she can love and hide her flame?
' I think not of success, for all that I
' Intend is but to tell thee this, and die.

' The gardener, when he incloseth his ground, planneth out his walks, and saith unto his attendants—Here shall rise the mount, here wind the stream, and here extend the grass-plat; yet remembereth that lawns, water, mounts, and terraces, do not make a garden. It is in vain that tree answereth to tree, that shade here receiveth us from sun-shine, and that there sun-shine inviteth us from the shade; it is not yet compleat: Nature may do all this; the tulip must invite the eye with it's painting, the lily must charm with it's whiteness, and the musk-flower fill the sense with sweets, or it is a park, not a garden.

' Thus I have in vain ornamented my apartments; in vain the gilded foliage invites me to look into the glass; in vain the crimson couch receiveth my sinking limbs; in vain the rising bed calleth to be pressed, if thou my flower, my blossom, thou who art lily, tulip, and musk together, thou whose form feasteth every sense at once, refusest to come to me. I have many other sentiments to communicate to you, but these are too much to be told on that which cannot blush while it delivers them.

' I have never rested since the moment I saw you come into the shop where I lodge, to buy a wash-ball. Would they could sell me any thing that could wash out the remembrance of such charms!—But perhaps you will come to me. In that hope I support a few moments longer the miserable being of your eternally devoted slave and creature,

' ELIZ. SPARKLE.'

Our hero gazed with a wild astonishment on this pompous declaration. We need not say it was the most extraordinary performance that had ever fallen in his way. Some of our readers, we are afraid, will be apt to join with him in his admiration. Thoroughly satisfied we are, however, that whatever censure it may fall under, the harsh and almost universal term of contempt *Low* cannot be passed upon it; and, if any should suppose it is out of nature, we can only answer, that while they by this convince us they do not know the lady who could have written it, they give sufficient proof that themselves are out of life, to every body that is in it.

To answer such a letter was impossible,

ble, nor was it necessary; to appear before the lady was the only proper reply to it. Mr. Edwards made little hesitation about this; and though Mrs. Ruth begged of him, for Heaven's sake, not to go out again, (whether this was from the fear of her master's displeasure, or from some other motive, we shall not presume to guess) but he sallied, with as much precipitation as bursts forth the trembling husband, whose helpmate's voice rolls swifter than her person down the narrow-winding stairs, to tell him her poor babes must be starved for want of bread, while he is rioting and wasting his time and his money at an alehouse.

He had no sooner enquired in the shop if Miss Sparkle was at home, than a very polite footman conducted him up stairs: and he had no sooner entered a very elegant apartment, than the more elegant mistress of it, a fine, delicate, blooming creature, threw herself upon his bosom; and, with eyes swimming in floods of tenderness as she pressed him to her soft breast, sighed out—'And am I so happy to see you, dear, good creature! But I am a fool to fancy I am happy.' Here she drew herself from him, and sinking upon a couch, covered her blushes, or her want of blushes, which of the two the historian positively sayeth not, with her hand, and waited her lover's declaration.

When we consider the part of the world Mr. Edwards was just come from, where women of taste or delicacy would be as much out of the course of nature as centaurs or unicorns, we are not to wonder that the sight of one of the elegantest figures of this elegant age struck him with no common emotions. Miss Sparkle is as careful of her attitudes, on these occasions, as the people who only represent occurrences of this kind on the stage; she practises an intended air of softness, or severity, as often at the glass as Mrs. Cibber does. The form in which she had now disposed her limbs was of the most advantageous kind, and was too thoroughly practised before-hand not to be played off in perfection. Her head, reclining to one side, gave her an opportunity of shewing one of the brightest eyes Nature ever gave a woman; and a cheek naturally all lily, but now stained with a living crimson, that every instant glowed more and more intensely; and might have alarmed the

youth who came out of a rattlesnake country, had he recollected that the colours of that terrible reptile always brighten up in this manner when it is about to do mischief. Her neck displayed more of it's snowy brightness by this posture, than it could have done under any other circumstances; and the hyacinthine veins that wandered over it, almost disclosed through their thin coats the purple fluid that rolled through them. Her bosom let somebody describe that dares to look at it; I have more regard to the inhabitant of my own. Her waist, naturally almost too slender, was now rather improved than injured by the effects of an accident that had a little rounded it. The sattin petticoat, from which the gown had fallen back with an artful negligence, fell so close, as almost to shew the shape of the limbs it covered; and it's shortness suffered about the half of one of the truest formed legs in the universe to show itself, terminated by the only foot in the world that is worthy to have that honour. The white sattin shoe, the gauze silk stocking, the elegance of the gown, and the fineness of the linen, all conspired to add, if possible, to the charms of the object. The youth, in honest rapture, sighed out what he could not speak; and, after three days transport, issued out of the apartments of this earthly angel with a heart full of triumphant content, and with three hundred pounds less than he went in with in his pocket.

CHAP. IV.

A VISIT TO THE LADY; THE FIRST PUBLICK APPEARANCE OF OUR HERO.

ORESTES, when he had got Pyrrhus's throat cut for the sake of Hermione, and lost Hermione into the bargain, was a tame character in comparison of uncle Jeremy, who, after venturing so considerable a sum of money, and promising himself such immoderate advantages from it, had now, for three days together, lost the man on whose account he had been doing it.

The youth, who did not think it prudent to return to a scene of dirt and quarrelling, immediately, from so opposite a party, had asked the lady where he could sit down agreeably for an hour or two;
and

and she had, by perfect accident, directed him to George's in Pall Mall. He had scarce entered, when two or three people were making towards him at once, but were prevented by Monsieur Le Gardien, who, making a diagonal from an opposite quarter of the room, crossed between the youth and them; and immediately facing about, entered into a conversation with him.

Young minds are always very communicative of their successes in love affairs: the youth was at first surprized at the foreigner's congratulating him on the happiness he had been enjoying; but he immediately after talked over the whole scene of rapture to him; and was no sooner informed that he had owed it to this gentleman, who had taken him into the shop for that purpose, and had mentioned him favourably to the lady; than, as he had always understood these kind of services were to be paid for, he was offering a gratuity. The other stopped his hand, with—'Me excuse! all dis; me see you be very young: but Monsieur, the gentilhomme never take money. *Eh bien Sire*, shall we play a party at piquet?' Our hero, who had been used to beat his father and all his acquaintance at this game, readily accepted the challenge, and in half an hour lost two hundred and forty pounds. This unluckily was one hundred and forty more than he had about him. He was afraid to go on, and was under some confusion how to give over: the foreigner immediately saw it; he politely made slight of the accident, accepted the hundred pound bill he had about him, and his note of hand for the remainder; and left him to return to his uncle.

Mrs. Ruth, who met him at the door of the old gentleman's apartment, easily guessed the reason of the cold and contemptuous looks she now received from him. She told him, with a sigh, her master was not at home; that he had been almost distracted for him these three days; and was now, she believed, waiting for him at the house he had taken for his residence: she gave his chairmen the necessary instructions where to carry him; and he, in a very little time, found himself at his new home.

Uncle Jeremy was sounding the upholsterer, who had furnished the best apartment, at what rate he would take back the things, in case the gentleman for whose use they were intended should

dislike them, or should—or, in short, should not come to the house. That tradesman, who had now twice suffered very heavily by the old gentleman's cunning, resolved to make himself some reparation in this last bargain: he had named some very hard conditions, and told him, no man else of the trade would have any concern in the affair, as he would see there was something wrong at the bottom. The old fellow was sensible enough of this, and was pleading very humbly for better terms, when a thundering knock at the door alarmed everybody's attention; and the uncle, on getting to the window, had the joy to see his lost nephew walk out of a chair, and enter the house. The rage which under other circumstances would have been vented on the young gentleman, was now all discharged on the upholsterer; the old fellow thrust him out of doors, with a multitude of very opprobrious, we do not venture to say, unjust names; and, immediately running to his nephew, caught him in his arms; and, while he expressed his real joy at seeing him, wholly forgot the resentment his absence might have very well justified.

The youth was in raptures at his accommodations, and his heart fluttered strangely at the sight of the two gaudy suits that lay on the bed: he immediately dressed himself in one of them; he strutted about from glass to glass in his dining-room, and admired the elegance of every thing about him; he wished for nothing so much as sending to his dear Sparkle, to partake of his pleasures; but this the old gentleman rendered impracticable, by staying to sup with him, and even to see him in bed.

A sale of a city alderman's effects had luckily helped uncle Jeremy to his shirevalty chariot, on the first day of the young gentleman's absence, for twelve guineas. He had employed a journeyman coach-painter to lick up and gild it for four more, and had entered it in his account at two hundred and sixty pounds ten shillings: this had been ready the day before, such expedition had been used about it; and, on the succeeding morning, it was the first object that met our hero's eyes, as he looked out into the street. He now found he had only locked himself up during a period in which it was impossible for him to have been seen as he ought; and impatient to shew his mistress his splendour and magnificence,

magnificence, he ordered a dinner for her at four, dressed himself as quick as his admiration at every part of his habit would permit, ordered his chariot to the washball shop, and after it had attracted the eyes of every body thereabout for five hours, returned back in triumph in it, with the blooming Sparkle by his side.

CHAP. V.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING BETWEEN MR. EDWARDS AND UNCLE JEREMY; A NEW SUPPLY ADVANCED, AND THE CONDITIONS OF IT.

MR. Edwards was leading his mistress with infinite gaiety into the dining-room, when he saw the venerable figure of his uncle filling one of the easy chairs by the fire-side. If the delicacy of the lady was strangely shocked at the appearance of so uncouth a creature, how much more so was it, when, with great severity of countenance, he advanced up to her, and desired her to walk down stairs again!

It was in vain the lover pleaded: the old fellow was too discerning in the ways of the world, not to see at once of what quality the lady was who was introduced into the house with so much the appearance of the mistress of it; and the consideration of what he had already suffered from her, as he very rightly judged she was the person who had kept his nephew all the preceding time in secret, rendered him inexorable. All that the lover could do, was to send her home in his chariot; and this, in spite of all the old fellow's reasons and remonstrances, he insisted on.

We do not always see the event of our actions, or the results of the accidents which cross them. The absence of this lady, though it heartily mortified our youth for the first half-hour, gave an opportunity afterwards for the uncle's entering on a subject at least as necessary to him as the lady herself, and which it would have been impossible to have brought upon the carpet before her: this was money.

Uncle Jeremy rather hoped than imagined the stripling had already got rid of the sum his father had furnished him with for his whole expedition. The

theme was no sooner started, however, than the nephew declared the emptiness of his pockets; and the old gentleman, after some gentle rebukes for his extravagance, and declaring the utter incapacity he was in, after the expences of the house, furniture, and equipage, to furnish him; observed, when he had thoroughly plunged him into despair, that he believed he did know one way of supplying him with something for his present occasions; but that he must borrow it from a person who was an infamous rascal, and would insist upon five and twenty per cent.

The youth readily enough agreed to the conditions; and the old fellow, who had told him he believed he could get him four hundred on these terms, recollecting in his way home that he could never make so much advantage of his money any other way, emptied all his bags and pocket-books, and returned in an hour, telling him, he had found the old villain at home, had succeeded beyond expectation, and had brought him no less than two thousand pounds.

The young gentleman was eagerly writing his draft upon the father for the money, and calculating the interest of two thousand pounds, at twenty-five per cent. for three months, which he reckoned as the utmost time for making the remittance, when the uncle informed him, that these people never lent for less than a year certain; 'though for my own sake, Sir,' says he, 'I must beg you to solicit your father to remit it sooner than three months if he can, because I shall be uneasy at continuing longer than necessary engaged for so large a sum.' He told him, he need not indeed trouble himself to add the interest, for that the lender, in these cases, always deducted it at first out of the principal; and, in consequence of this equitable agreement, counted him out fifteen hundred pounds, and took his draft of three months upon his father for the two thousand.

Disadvantageously as they were obtained, however, our hero now found himself possessed of all the requisites of a fine gentleman; and the uncle, who considered that he could have no farther benefit from him for some time, and that it was no more his business to be seen encouraging him in his extravagances, than it was his interest to check him in them,

them, retired to the arms of Mrs. Ruth, whose virtue something very like a miracle had preserved; and never troubled his nephew with a visit for five weeks after.

CHAP. VI.

MR. EDWARDS IS INTRODUCED TO A ROUT. CHARACTER OF A REMARKABLE LITTLE LADY.

MR. Edwards, in whom a natural love of justice was a first principle, no sooner found himself possessed of this sum, than he dispatched a servant to invite Mr. Le Gardien, to whom he had lost his money at piquette, and paid him the remainder of the sum.

The foreigner pressed the not receiving it at that time, if it was of any inconvenience to him; and, in spite of the utmost declarations of the other, received it with a very well affected reluctance.

He sat with him half an hour after the settling this point, talking of the common occurrences, and upon other equally interesting topics; and at the end of this time was taking his leave. The youth, who had seen so little of the town, or known so little of the history of any lady in it, that every thing was news to him, had been vastly entertained with the chit chat of his visitor: he pressed him to stay to supper; but the other, with many apologies, declined the honour, telling him he was engaged at a rout that evening; but adding, that he would, if he pleased, introduce him to some of the best company in town, that would be assembled there.

Mr. Edwards declined it, as if he was more than half willing: the stranger saw this, and pressed him earnestly, telling him, in fine, that if he refused to go, he should not think he believed he had any such appointment. Our hero's backwardness had only proceeded from his diffidence of his own qualifications for appearing in such company; this his new friend saw as well as the rest, and, by two or three very familiar arguments, got the better of it: they stepped into the chariot together; and, as they went along, our hero expressing a desire to know who the lady was to whose house they were going, the fo-

reigner answered him in terms which, put into English, would have run about thus:

'The lady, Sir, to whom I shall this evening have the honour to introduce you, is at once, perhaps, the greatest and the least woman in the kingdom. I would begin my account of her with telling you who she is, if I was informed of that circumstance; which I am apt to believe I should be, if she was acquainted with it herself. You will find her in the house of, or perhaps more properly, in the same house with, a gentleman whose name she bears, and whom you would join in the opinion of the world, and suppose to be her father, but that you will see him behave to her with all the respect due from a dependant; and the lady to him with an air of easy superiority, though tempered with the utmost politeness.

'If you hear her converse in publick, you will declare her to have studied only the arts of courts: if in a more private party, you will think familiarity itself inspires every part of her deportment, and judgment every sentiment of her conversation. Engage her on a topick of the Belles Lettres, and you will imagine her life has been devoted to reading; but hear her touch the harpsichord, and you will retract all your former opinions, and assert, that the rest of her qualifications must be innate; for that this alone cannot have been acquired at a less expence than that of her whole life's application.

'You will find her house crouded with people of the first quality. A foreign ambassador never was four days among us without being introduced to her; or half four days afterwards, during his whole stay, without visiting her.

'You won't find her wantonly profuse of money; but you will never see an instance of her wanting it, any more than ****. The foreigner was going on in his character, when the chariot stopped at the door, and prevented farther conversation.

Our hero was introduced to the lady of the house in form; and having the good fortune to come in early, he had the pleasure to convince himself, in a quarter of an hour's conversation with her, that all the foreigner had advanced was little in comparison of what he ought to have said.

said. Mr. Edwards, who never made a compliment to an unworthy object, was always ready to say every civil thing to a person's face that he had reason to say any where else. The lady was not displeased with his address, though much out of the usual stile; but she told him, with an honest blush, that her place in his good opinion would be but very short-lived, for that he would in a few minutes see two persons there, before whom no other female pretensions to any merit in conversation could stand.

The words were hardly delivered, before two ladies entered, who, it was easy to distinguish by their manner, were greatly above the common level: the one of them wore in her face all the jovial pleasantry of Milton's Euphrosyne; and the open countenance and free soul of the other were never represented but in the Liberality of Guido. It was easy to find, by half a dozen sentences, that these were the rivals the lady of the house had told him of: whether he would have allowed them all that pre-eminence that her modest opinion of her own qualifications had declared for, we have indeed no power to inform the reader; for, after some congratulations to another lady, who came in immediately afterwards, in which she was told that every thing followed the interests of her family; that Lord H—— was appointed principal, Mr. S——, his substitute; and Bishop H——, the instructor; the card-tables were set, the Pharaoh bank established, and the company grew intent on their diversion, and spent the succeeding five hours in doing very little more than what automats of wood and wire might have performed as advantageously.

Mr. Edwards, whose utter unacquaintance with all games of skill rendered him no sort of match for any body at the whist or brag parties, left a hundred pounds behind him at the Pharaoh table, and very coolly repaired to his bed by four in the morning.

CHAP. VII.

A DISSERTATION ON THE MODERN ART OF HUMBUGGING.

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name, which was very successfully laughed out of the world some years ago by the Spectator: but as Nature, though you push her off with a pitchfork, as Horace says, will return upon you, the triumph of that author was but temporary; it has of late been revived among us with many additional advantages, and is at this day practised with great success in every polite company in town.

In the days of the Spectator, the art, however odious it appeared to him, consisted in one simple proposition, and was no more than the telling a plain barefaced falsehood with an undaunted countenance. A fellow, who could inform his friend that his father had just broke his neck; or a stranger, that his house was burnt down two hours before; and, after giving them half a day's pain and anxiety, could excuse the lye, and claim the title of a man of wit, by pronouncing aloud the word *bite*; was at the head of the science: but, in our more improved age, the professors of it have done well to change it's name, as they have indeed made it a more complex and intricate art.

The professor of the modern Humbugg, for such is the polite name of this qualification, must either have from Nature an unalterable countenance, or from Art a power of commanding all it's successive variations, and preserving it inviolably in each as long as the present situation of the case renders it necessary: he must have a head full of imagination, and a heart empty of every trace of candour or humanity. The first sacrifice he must make to it is truth; the next is friendship. No man is a proper object of it who has not integrity enough, or a sufficiently good opinion of the person who abuses him, to suppose him incapable of fraud or meanness; and it can never be exerted with success against any one, but such as either the person that employs it calls his friend, or who has real merit enough to support some degree of praise.

Under these circumstances the Humbugger attacks the man whom he has selected for his butt; and, while he prostitutes his own candour to the raising his good opinion of himself too high, he gives the signal to every body about him to laugh at him for a coxcomb, for doing so.

A servile flattery is the basis of this great branch of the art; but, while it possesses

possesses all the meanness of that quality, it infinitely excels it in degree, and adds, to all the baseness of the vice itself, that of it's being done with a professed intent to hurt the object.

It was the fortune of our hero to meet with one of the honest and ingenious gentlemen who profess this noble art, at the rout where he spent his evening just described: had it not been so, gentle reader, thou would'st, in all probability, never have found this digression concerning the art itself in our memoirs. The gentleman of that polite company who was possessed of this amiable qualification, had it not single; he professed also the honest and ingenious art or trade, by which ever name it may be properest to call it, of the gamester; and, by the help of a partner who understood him, and had learnt his signals, made a tolerable livelihood of whist.

That his partner in the art might be less suspected, he took care the person should be of the sex least liable to such a suspicion. He had begun with teaching her the game in an uncommonly perfect manner; and, after this, had instructed her in his signals, by means of which, by the artful disposition of the fingers, and certain mute signs from the feet, they were able to inform one another of every card in their hands. The drawing the hand down one side of the face when a fresh suit was played, expressed the having the Ace; the opening the hand of cards, the King; the drawing them closer, the Queen; and no signal at all, the Knave: a gentle touch of the foot was the notice of one honour; a repetition of it described two; and so of the rest.

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A bubble of this consequence was worth taking some pains to secure. The only accidents that could cross Mr. Pliant's purpose were, that another party might secure him, or that he might at one time or other suspect the means of their success. To evade the possibility of either of these, Mr. Pliant called in to the assistance of Sharping the sister art of Humming: he waited on Mr. Edwards early the next morning at his lodgings; told him he had enough to plead in excuse of the abruptness of such a visit, for that it was intended only to prevent mischief; and concluded—'Sir, you are a stranger to the dangers you may run in town, in the way to an amour that is worth pursuing. I observed your eyes,' continued he, 'very busy about the neck of Lady Bloom; and I may tell you, under the precautions I shall give you, that you are not indifferent to her. Shall I say, I read it in her eyes? I'll tell you the truth; she enquired after you of me, with an emotion that was too much for curiosity alone to have inspired. You may have her, if you pursue her; but you have a rival that will be troublesome. You saw the tall genteel fellow, with pale hair, that leant over her; he marked every glance, on both sides, between you: indeed, he will not be very hasty, I believe, in a thing of this kind, because he has been unhappy enough to kill two people already; but I dare not assure you he will part with his mistress tamely.'

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Mr. Edwards, who had listened with an unaltered countenance to this narration, answered coolly—'I should imagine, Sir, there is no man who would refuse to draw his sword on so good an occasion.'

'occasion,'—'I don't suppose, Sir,' replied Pliant eagerly, 'that you would; but I thought it friendship, nay, indeed, but common humanity, to a stranger, to inform you of the superiority of your rival in this point. As to the sword, he is in continual practice; and, for pistols, it has been his custom to fire at a six-pence twenty times a day for these two years, on account of an officer of horse, who has been all that time in France, and with whom he has an engagement of this kind at his return. This gentleman, you are to know, Sir, is as famous for the pistol as your rival is for the sword; and all this preparation has hardly yet set him upon the level with him.'

It was easy, from Mr. Edwards's answer, to find that he was *taken in*, as the phrase runs; that is, that he did not suppose Mr. Pliant to be a liar or a rascal; and that he had a good opinion enough of himself to believe it very possible that a woman of consequence might be in love with him. Perhaps Mrs. Sparkle had conducted not a little to opening the way to this mischief, by the extravagant encomiums she had bestowed on his person and accomplishments. Many a man has fallen a sacrifice to the vanity and ingratitude of his mistress on such an occasion; and an honest fellow has no sooner talked a woman he likes into a belief that she is an angel, and that all womankind are contemptible in comparison of her, than she determines, since this is the case, not to throw such charms away upon him: and Mr. Edwards's mistress now seems to have shared the same fate. It would not have been easy, by any other means, to have stopped the torrent of his adoration for the divine Sparkle; but no sooner the more divine Lady Bloom appeared as her rival, than, conscious from that mistress's flattery that he might carry this if he liked it, he determined that he would.

He thanked Mr. Pliant very politely for this act of friendship, and pressed him to breakfast with him. At noon they went into the Park, where one of the first objects that met their eyes was Lady Bloom, jiggling along the Mall with all the freedom of air of the unhappy libertines, who were throwing themselves in the way of every body they came near for bread; and dressed perfectly in the fashionable taste, that is, so like those unhappy creatures, that no-

thing but a personal knowledge of her could have prevented the taking her for one of them.

Our party paid their compliments as they passed her; and she returned them with a most graceful smile, and with a stoop of the head, that expressed a mixture of satisfaction and of a tender languor. This, though it meant nothing at that time, had been copied from some happy fair one, in whom it expressed all that our hero thought he read in it on this occasion.

However favourable Mr. Edwards's ideas might be from this circumstance, certain it is, he had raised them on a very slight foundation; for the lady, at this time, knew nothing of the matter: she had directed her compliment solely to Mr. Pliant, who knew too much of the world to understand any more by it than she meant. He did not fail, however, to place it all to the account of his friend; he told him, there was evidently love enough in her soul, but he wished, for both their sakes, she had more discretion: he begged leave to quit him for a moment; and walking up to her ladyship, who was a woman of great spirit, and fond of raillery to an uncommon degree, he told her so much of his plot upon the Creole as regarded herself, and she promised, with great readiness, to join in the *hum*, and promote it to the utmost.

We mention this, as an instance how easy it is for a man to be deceived, where a female is in the party against him; and how naturally a woman of fashion may, while she intends only to be witty, become an accomplice with a pick-pocket. Nature never formed a man so happily for the exercise of this polite species of wit as Mr. Pliant; the natural delicacy of his person, the softness of his manner, the interesting complaisance that shewed itself in him on every occasion, and the unlimited command he had over the muscles of his face, conspired to render it natural and unsuspected in him. He told our hero, with great apparent good-nature, that he had been saying every thing in the world in his favour to the lady, and at the same time preaching up some caution to her. Mr. Edwards was full of acknowledgments for his good offices; and the morning concluded with his new friend's engaging him to dine at his house, where, by perfect accident, there happened to be a lady who

was an intimate of Lady Bloom's, and who was no sooner informed of the violence of the lover's passion for her ladyship, than she promised to do every thing in her power in his favour.

CHAP. VIII.

THE HAPPINESS OF A FAMILY ACQUAINTANCE; AND THE ADVANTAGES THAT SOMETIMES ACCRUE FROM IT.

LADY Bloom did not fail to contribute her share to the entertainment that was to be furnished from our hero's passion for her; she half killed her chairmen with the hurry of running from one house to another, to give an account of it: nor did she stop her course till she had told every female, and most of the males of her acquaintance, of the new-landed savage, who fancied she was desperately in love with him. As to the lady our hero had been so happy to meet with at his friend Beau Pliant's, she was no other than the person we have already celebrated as the accomplice of that industrious chevalier at his whist schemes.

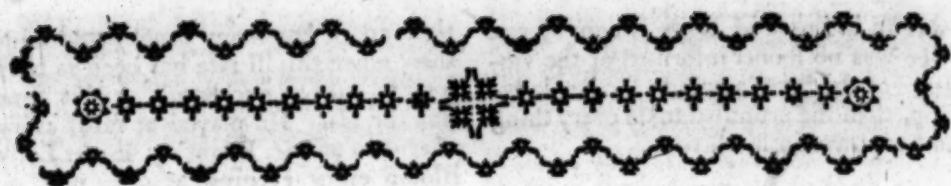
Our hero now thought himself extremely happy: he had got rid of the troublesome acquaintance of his uncle, he knew not how or why; he had money in plenty in his pocket; he was on the high road to an intrigue with the finest woman in town; and he had made an acquaintance, as it appeared to him, in the most agreeable, sociable family in the world; and more particularly an intimacy with a man who esteemed and loved him, and who appeared as able as willing to serve him in a thousand different circumstances.

Thus it appeared to Mr. Edwards at least; and thus, gentle reader, whoever

thou art, it has many times appeared to thee, when thy ill fate has been as busy for thy ruin as our hero's at this time was for his. He played at cards every afternoon at Mr. Pliant's; he met Lady Bloom every evening at one rout or other: he never made the least advances to her that were not returned with an open freedom; and he could, on every occasion, see the eyes of the whole company fixed with envy, as he understood it, upon him. If he observed them laugh, he concluded it was at her indiscreet passion; but this he never so much as wished to check. He was of an age at which the boasting of an amour is one of the greatest pleasures that attends it, and is a pleasure that seldom is suppressed, though the price of it be the reputation of the person in the world to whom the betrayer has most obligations. An observation this, which, if rightly attended to, would keep every woman, who has the least regard for her reputation, from engaging in an intrigue with any man under eight and twenty.

The true state of our hero's affairs at this time, however, was, that he had a sum sufficient to encourage him in extravagance, not to support him in it: he had lost the only acquaintance in the world who would have thought it worth while to advise him; he had made an intimacy with a man who had engaged him in a pursuit that made him the jest of every company he fell into, and who, with the assistance of his friendly family, had by degrees stripped him, hundred by hundred, of every guinea he had been master of; and, under colour of giving him a chance for winning back, had afterwards got him eight hundred and fifty guineas in debt to him: for this he very good-naturedly accepted a draft upon uncle Jeremy, payable at sight, having been previously informed that the father had given him an unlimited bill of credit on that gentleman.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
MR. GEORGE EDWARDS,
A CREOLE.
BOOK THE THIRD.

IN WHICH OUR HERO MAKES GREAT ADVANCES TOWARD BECOMING
A PHILOSOPHER OF THE FIRST CLASS.

CHAP. I.

A SCHEME OF BEAU PLIANT'S ON
OUR HERO DOES NOT SUCCEED
PERFECTLY TO HIS EXPECTA-
TION.



It is a maxim with the people of Mr. Pliant's stamp, that the money they have won is never secure till it is in their pocket. This gentleman had not been possessed of Mr. Edwards's draft five minutes, before he took occasion to leave the room on some slight pretences, and hurried to the person of whom he was to receive the cash. The habitation of Mr. Jeremy Edwards was one of the last in the world into which a stranger could get admittance: the gentle Ruth had received him at the door; and, as her master was absent, had enquired into his business, but in vain. He had told her he would come again in half an hour, and determined not to return home without some certainty as to so considerable a sum: he repeated this kind of visit four times, and spent the intermediate periods, in no

very patient humour, at Will's Coffee-house.

The draft had been put into his hands immediately after dinner; and as all the visits he had made to Mr. Jeremy had been paid in the two hours succeeding that time, which were those he always spent in the Park, the prudent domestick, though she did not think it advisable to send a stranger to him in that place, had, from the possibility of her master's calling in at home before his going to the coffee-house, told the visitor, that he might very likely see him, if he called again after such a time.

Mr. Pliant was looking at his watch, and somewhat impatiently waiting for the termination of the half-hour, at the end of which he was to make his fifth visit, when a porter delivered a letter at the bar, which he desired might be given to Mr. Edwards with all speed. Mr. Pliant had been thoroughly dissatisfied with the appearance of every thing about uncle Jeremy's apartments; and, if he could have imagined that the owner of them could possibly have been known at so polite a coffee-house as this, would long before have enquired into his circumstances

circumstances of the lady of the house. He no sooner therefore heard the name of Edwards pronounced by this messenger, than he walked hastily up to the bar, and enquired whether the Mr. Edwards, for whom that letter was left, was a Mr. Jeremy Edwards, who lived in a strange dungeon at the bottom of the yard: he was going to enquire who and what he was, but these and all farther questions were prevented by the arrival of another person, whom the name Edwards and the sight of a letter had brought to the scene of enquiry almost as soon as himself, and who, stretching out a yellow, wrinkled, meagre, long-nailed, unwashed hand, with half the shirtless arm belonging to it from under the covert of a greasy sleeve, at the same time that he seized upon the letter, turned up his grey, lack-lustre, eye to the face of the blooming Mr. Pliant, and telling him it was a dungeon into which no such powdered beggars as he would ever find admittance, very coolly walked back to his seat, without deigning to cast one look back upon the object of his contempt.

It was indeed with some kind of reason that Mr. Jeremy had expressed himself so severely on this occasion; for, additionally to the insult conveyed by the word Dungeon in Mr. Pliant's question, he could not but recollect that he had lent many sums to people of that figure, who had brought others like themselves in sufficient number to join in the security, but that he had never once been paid a debt of that kind in his life, nor ever been able to find any one of the people afterwards. This had given him a very well-grounded contempt for powder and embroidery on a borrower; and, as he could not suppose there was any other business a stranger of this figure could possibly have with him, he would have been ready enough to have given him his answer, in the same kind of terms, without the additional provocation of the affront he had received.

Mr. Pliant was thoroughly dissatisfied at the figure of the man on whom his draft was made, and as heartily mortified at the unlucky step he had taken towards his acquaintance. A moment's consideration recovered him, however, from his confusion, and informed him that it was his business, at all events, to see an end of the affair he came about, before he joined his company again,

He walked up to the table at which the old gentleman was seated, and told him, he could easily pass over the incivility of his address to him, as himself had ignorantly, and indeed rudely, been the occasion to it; and added that, when he was at leisure, he should be glad of an opportunity of communicating to him the business he came about.

The old gentleman had broke the seal of his letter, and was wiping his spectacles in order to read it, when he received this civil speech from Mr. Pliant. He continued the operation during the time he was delivering it; and for some minutes after, at the end of which he very deliberately put them on, and without bestowing a word, or even a look on the beau, opened and began to read the letter.

Mr. Pliant, who was now sensible enough that it was not his business to put the old fellow out of humour, sat patiently while he read it; which, as he did it very deliberately, and as the letter consisted of three sides, and was not written in the best hand in the world, took up no very small portion of time: when he had got to the bottom of the last page, he very calmly turned it over, and instead of folding it up as Mr. Pliant had expected, began to read it again. The beau still kept his patience, though under the additional provocation of having the eyes of the whole company upon him; and being very sensible that his complaisance would be construed, by many of them who knew him, not greatly to his advantage. At length, the old gentleman having finished the second perusal of his letter, carefully folded it up, and taking off his spectacles, locked full in the face of Mr. Pliant, and said—'I tell you, friend, it don't signify waiting; I won't lend you a far-thing.'

This was spoke so loud, that Mr. Pliant found it necessary, in order to clear his own honour, to do a thing which prudence would otherwise have pleaded very strongly against, and to answer him as loud—'Sir, I have a draft of eight hundred pounds on you, from your nephew, for money lent him: will you pay it or not?'

The name of eight hundred pounds, advanced to his nephew by any body but himself, raised the old fellow in a posture of horror from his seat: he looked upon Pliant as a man who had robbed

bed him of the interest of that sum at fifty per cent. and that had laid a scheme for supplanting him in all his future designs upon the young fellow: his face increased it's length by two inches; a palsy could not have shook his whole frame more violently, than this unexpected attack did; his spectacles dropped from his unnerved hand, and though they broke in the fall, he never remembered that it would cost a shilling to mend them. He stood speechless in this agony for some moments; but, Mr. Pliant at length repeating his question aloud, the old fellow recovered the use of his voice enough to answer—No! I'll never pay it: he knows he might have any money he pleased of me, and I don't understand how you came by this.' Mr. Pliant, who had been thoroughly provoked by the preceding behaviour of the old fellow, grew outrageous at this suspicion of his honour; a quality about which it is observed, that those people are always most solicitous who have least of it. He did not condescend to answer, but, rising on tip-toes for the blow, levelled a stroke with his cane at the old fellow's head, which would, in all probability, have put a period to his existence much sooner than the laws of this history require, had it not been stopped, in it's descent, by the arm of a plain-dressed, grave man, who sat just behind; and who, seeing the mischief that was coming, received no inconsiderable hurt in the preventing it. The stranger was for pleading in favour of the uncle, that the care of his nephew might very well be an excuse for what he had said; when Pliant, making no doubt that he, who had taken such a blow without resentment, would bear more, turned all the torrent of his fury on the new object.

The stranger seized his arm (with a very rude gripe, as the first blow was coming, and directing his foot to a part in which Hudibras very whimsically supposes honour to be lodged, raised his light antagonist, by the force of the kick, aloft from the ground, which he did not reach again till at about four yards distance, and then not in an erect posture.

The beau, as soon as he had got up on his legs again, told the stranger he desired to speak two words to him; which he had no sooner whispered in his ear, than the other answered aloud—' I

' have no reason to believe you'll keep your appointment: does any body here know you?' Here was a question, in which Mr. Pliant's honour was again concerned, and which his interest had also some connection with. He saw people enough who knew him, but not one on whose good opinion he could depend in regard to his claim to the debt; till at length he observed a brother of the lay, as they express it, at one of the tables, whom he had not seen before, and who was no other than the foreigner who had made young Edwards acquainted with Sparkle, and had stripped him afterwards of somewhat more than his original allowance. Pliant's eyes were no sooner fixed on this gentleman, than, depending on that honour which subsists between all the persons of this stamp—' There,' says he, ' there is a gentleman whom I have the honour to be known to, and who was present at George's when I lent the money about which all this dispute has been.' If the uncle had looked on Pliant as a man who was robbing him of the advantages he might make of the extravagances of his nephew, this gentleman, who had seen that happy adventurer carry the youth off from the Park the morning before, and who now found what use he had made of the acquaintance, received him with a still more hateful eye; he would perhaps have kept his secrets at another time, or would not have scrupled to have lied, or been perjured, for him: but here was a case which touched himself too nearly. Honour, when not founded on honesty, is but an imaginary existence; interest now pleaded against the adherence to it, on the foreigner's part; and he replied without hesitation, that he knew Mr. Pliant very well; that he did not pretend to say any thing in regard to the dispute with that gentleman; ' but, Sir,' says he, addressing himself to the uncle, ' I never saw him lend any money to your nephew; and as to the draft, I don't doubt but it is for a play-debt, and I think you should enquire farther into the gentleman's character, before you pay it.'

Pliant, who had very unhappily mistaken his man in the former attack, knew so much of this knight of the industry, that he determined at once to revenge his quarrel, and establish his reputation again at his expence. He fell violently

violently on him, first with his cane, and afterwards with his fists. The other was the stronger, though Pliant was the more active: many a hard blow was given on each side, and Victory had hung out her scales in exact equilibrio for a considerable time; when at length a trip over one of the benches having brought Monsieur Le Gardien to the ground, and every body calling out, that it was unfair to beat him when he was down; the usurer flew to the assistance of his routed champion, and made so excellent a use of those weapons with which we have before had occasion to observe the extremities of his fingers were armed by nature, that Mr. Pliant's face was in an instant covered with blood and wounds; and the pain, which was too much for a man of his delicate and tender nerves to bear, obliged him to put an end to the combat.

CHAP. II.

A VISIT FROM THE FRIEND OF OUR HERO TO MR. PLIANT: THE STRANGE CONSEQUENCES IT WAS ATTENDED WITH.

IT is very beneficent of Providence, that, amidst the vast portion of knowledge we boast of having been favoured with from her, we have no immediate means of receiving notices of events beyond the reach of our senses. Though the scene of Mr. Pliant's distress was scarce a hundred yards from his own house, every circumstance of it was as profound a secret to every body at home as if it had happened in the dominions of the Great Mogul: every thing there was in the usual innocent tranquillity; a visitor had accidentally dropped in, who supplied the place of Mr. Pliant at a corner of a whist-table; and the family were stripping the unfortunate Mr. Edwards, as usual, and comforting him with the certain amends he was to receive in the fortune and virtues of a wife; when a single rap at the door called up the footman from the arms of his Mauxalind, and he immediately ushered in a person who declared himself a stranger to the family, but had insisted on speaking with Mr. Edwards that instant.

The company were strangely alarmed

at the entrance of a plain figure of a man, with so odd an introduction; imagining from the circumstances, that he could be no other than one of those officers of justice, with the nature of whose visits the swift vicissitudes of Mr. Pliant's fortune had made every body that belonged to him sufficiently acquainted. They were rising in confusion from the table, when Mr. Edwards, whose surprize was of a very different kind, dropped his cards, and in an instant throwing his arms about the neck of the stranger, who was indeed no other than Mr. Spence, poured forth a profusion of transport, intermingled with complaints of his having so long absented himself from him.

His friend answered, that he had no right to shew himself before him, even now, according to the terms of their parting, nor indeed could have any: that he did not blame, but compassionate him for the conditions under which he had offered to renew their acquaintance, which, he acknowledged, were altogether equitable, though impracticable. Our hero stopped him, as he was going on in these explanations, with a thousand protestations of his sense of his own folly, of his unhappiness while he had lost his acquaintance, and of his resolutions never to part with him again. The company were very happy in the different opinion they now took up of the stranger, and were congratulating themselves on the change of the scene, when a thundering knock at the door ushered in the master of the family, in the lamentable situation we have before pictured him, as he arose from under the talons of uncle Jeremy; and with the additional horror of a black eye, which he had received from the other combatant.

The face of distress, with which Mr. Pliant entered his parlour, was raised into tenfold horror, on his seeing the person there whom we have just mentioned, as added to the company: he sunk into a chair; and, while the family were all gathering about him, commanded silence with his hand; while Mr. Spence, who was still addressing his discourse to his friend, went on in this manner—'Though I have no right, Mr. Edwards, to claim your friendship on these conditions, I have obligations to you, which, had I no better

'better motive to it, could not let me stand by and see you injured. I came hither to you from a place where three rascals (I am sorry to tell you, that your uncle, who either did not, or would not know me, is one; and this gentleman, who is paying so careful an attention to my discourse, another of them) were quarrelling who should have the sole privilege of stripping you of every farthing yourself or your father could be worth: I left them executing a just vengeance on one another; and during their scuffle, having learned who this gentleman was, and that you was at this time with him, have ventured, even into his own house, to do you service.'

Mr. Pliant, whom partly loss of blood, and partly a sense of his present situation, had rendered, by this time, much cooler than when he had engaged in the scuffle at the coffee-house, now would have condescended to attempt to reason with the friend of our hero; but that gentleman answered him very coolly and shortly—'Sir, there is a point you and I are to settle hereafter, and which no art, no evasion, on your part, shall put off: I know you have no great stomach to it; but there is but one condition on which I shall excuse you, which is, your giving up to this gentleman the draft you just now offered to his uncle, and, with it, whatever else you have, as you will chuse to phrase it, *won* of him. I shall be for giving it a harsher name; and I shall add this to the disadvantages of your refusal, that I shall make this circumstance so publick, that you will never have such another opportunity of exerting your skill in your profession.'

Mr. Pliant, though he cocked his hat fiercely, and could talk loud upon occasion, had a natural aversion to cold iron: he saw his antagonist, in this affair, was a hardy, severe, unmerciful fellow; and adding, to his regard to his person, the circumstance of the publick and irretrievable loss of his character, which he was threatened with, he came to a resolution, that it was better to lose the advantages of this one incident, than to part with the prospect of all that could hereafter offer to him; he gave up the draft, paid back all the money he had won, and, on Mr. Edwards's making some scruple about taking it back,

confessed that he had not obtained it fairly of him; and took his leave of the friend, with telling him—'Sir, you are a man of honour; and, now I have made reparation, I know you will never mention this.' Mr. Spence gave him no answer; but our hero promised so much in his name, and the party immediately broke up. The master of the house kept his bed for a fortnight; and Mr. Spence was, though with some difficulty, prevailed with to accompany his rescued friend to his house.

CHAP. III.

THE GRATITUDE OF A MISER.

UNCLE Jeremy, though he could very well reconcile it to his conscience to keep out of his nephew's way while he was squandering his money, could by no means suffer himself to be absent while other people were encroaching upon his prerogative of cheating him. He had no sooner got at liberty from the broil at the coffee-house, than he made the best of his way to his house: he had been waiting an hour in the dining-room, when our hero and his friend arrived; they were walking in with great cheerfulness and good-humour, when the uncle's face, now rendered infinitely more disagreeable by the frown it appeared dressed in, forbade the banners of pleasure for that time.

He was entering with great vehemence on the subject of his visit, when our hero, to put the shortest end possible to so disagreeable an entertainment, produced the draft which he had recovered, and immediately after laid down the money and bills he had received back with it: 'All this, Sir,' said he, 'I have indeed been defrauded of; but I have recovered it again by the friendship of this gentleman, to whom I had before a thousand obligations, which you will now be ashamed of having compelled me to make a shameful return for.'

The old fellow assisted his nephew in gathering up the money and papers, and saw him lock them safe up before he spoke a syllable. As soon as this was done—'You have been obliged to this gentleman, you say, for getting back your

CHAP. IV.

A CONVERSATION IN ST. JAMES'S PARK.

your money, and you shall be obliged to me for preserving it; he has only got it back from t'other rogue, that he may plunder you of it himself: I knew him well enough at the coffee-house, though I did not care to say any thing to him whilst he was taking my part; but I have heard from every body, that he has no visible way of living; and you may depend upon it, he'll never leave you, so long as you have a penny he can strip you of.' The old fellow proceeded to insist upon his nephew's never seeing his friend again; and added many threatenings to give him up entirely, and to write word to his father to send for him back, if he did not discard him that instant.

Mr. Spence was silent: there was nothing for him to say to a person so infinitely below his resentment, and so nearly allied to his friend. The young fellow, whose heart was naturally full of gratitude and generosity, and, at this time, was elevated to an uncommon height, by the joy of finding his lost friend, and the sense of the obligations he had to him, could not bear it with so much patience: he bestowed some harsh words on the uncle, and insisted on his leaving the house that moment. The old man would have found it difficult to have calmed this storm, or prevented its effects; but Mr. Spence very generously and prudently put a period to it, by declaring he would go himself: 'Your uncle, Sir,' says he, 'unjust and brutish as he is to me, has nothing but the care of your affairs in his thoughts; and, whatever reason I have to be provoked at his treatment, you have nothing to accuse him of but error.' All the solicitations in the world could not prevail with this gentleman to stay longer, than till he had, in some degree, reconciled the uncle and nephew; nor would he so much as say where he should afterwards be heard of. He knew the father's temper so well, that he was too sensible of the effect a complaint from the uncle would have, to give the least pretext or occasion for it. The uncle, after some more altercation, went home, and the hero of our story to bed; but too full of thought to leave any possibility of his receiving from it the usual refreshment.

THE loss of so worthy, so noble a friend, as Mr. Spence, left no room in our hero's breast for any thoughts, but those of the means of recovering him. Where to seek after his lodgings he was wholly ignorant: he knew him so entire a stranger in town, that an enquiry after him by name would be ridiculous; nor was there any hope of meeting him either on visits, or at publick diversions, both which he had heard him declare an utter aversion to.

He had spent the whole morning in hearty uneasiness on this subject, when a servant, who attended him as he was dressing, and who had been present at the conflict of the night before, guessing that this might be the source of his present disquiet, told him, that he had several times met that gentleman alone in the Park about noon, and that he fancied he always walked there at that time.

His master gave him a guinea for the intelligence; assumed a look of ease and chearfulness, that he had not put on the whole morning before; hurried on his cloaths, and drove immediately to St. James's Gate.

He had scarce set his foot in the first walk, when an inarticulate noise, probably more like that heard upon the instant of the confusion of tongues at Babel than any thing else in history, called his eye toward the occasion of it: he had no sooner faced about, than he found himself in the midst of the jovial party from whom it came, which consisted of eight people, four of each sex, who had arranged themselves together, a man and a woman alternately; and, joining hands like children at thread-needle, formed a straight line that reached across the Mall, and consequently turned every body they met into one of the other walks.

On the right were Lady Sophist and Dr. Killdarby, engaged anew in the famous dispute concerning the immortality of the soul; the lady having greatly
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strengthened herself by since reading Mr. Toland's Pantheisticon; and the doctor having picked up many arguments on his side from a paper entitled, *The Inspector*. At the other extremity of the line were the ladies, who have chosen to distinguish themselves lately by the very expressive names of the *Bold Thunder* and the *Brisk Lightning*, separated by a half-powdered beau, of the first magnitude; on the left of Dr. Killdarby, walked the sober, the discreet, the pretty Miss Sedate—we join heartily with the gentle reader in wondering how she got into such company—and in the centre were posted the egregious Mr. Dupe and the elegant Lady Bloom.

As our hero had turned upon them, they put a forced period to a very loud laugh, which it was not proper he should know was at his expence: they had discovered him at his first entrance into the Park; and as Lady Bloom had been fully let into the nature of the hum set on foot by Mr. Pliant, and had, on this occasion, very good-naturedly communicated it to the company, it had been resolved to make him the subject of their entertainment on this topick for the morning.

As the party extended quite across the walk, it was easy to pretend they could not let him into the chain; and as he found it impossible to retreat, after he had once faced about upon them, especially as Lady Bloom was of the party, he took his post solely in front of the line, exposed to attacks from every part of it. That the onset might not be too gross, the company easily understood one another's minds, and continued the subjects of conversation they had been diverted from by the arrival of this new object. Lady Sophist urged her new-learned arguments with an irresistible force on the modest doctor; Mr. Dupe was relating to Lady Bloom the victory that a hundred and fifty of his companions had obtained over six people, and the intrepidity with which they had dragged the hero of the adverse party, like Hector behind the car of Achilles, through a horsepond; and the *Brisk Lightning*, a lady who has had her share of praise once already in this history, was attacking the beau, who walked on her left, on his cruelty to the finest creature in the world, who had nothing in her that he

could except against, but that she loved him. The beau enjoyed the attack as the highest of all human praise; he looked with contempt and detestation to the whole sex, and resolutely answered—'As excellent an advocate as you are, Madam, you will plead in vain on this subject, if you speak for ever. I know the B—— for a tyrant of old; many an honest fellow's heart has ached to no purpose for her: I except the present company, Madam; else, damn 'em, 'tis the way of them all: and we, who have any little share of merit, ought to treat them accordingly, and revenge the quarrel of the sex upon them.'

This was a fair opening for the settled business of the scene. 'Mr. Edwards,' says Lady Bloom, with a dying look, and a most amiable discomposure of face, 'you are not of that brute's opinion, I hope: if a lady of any degree of merit should have discernment enough to see you were worthy a passion of this kind, you would not devote her to destruction in this barbarous manner.' The satisfaction of the whole company was too evident on this attack, not to inform our youth, who did not want apprehension on these occasions, that they were parties concerned in the question: if he could have doubted this, the eagerness with which they waited his reply would have confirmed him in it; and the utter disregard paid to all the other private disputes of the rest of the party, from the instant Lady Bloom had opened her mouth, gave him full conviction that he was to be shewn off for the diversion of the company. He determined to give into it to the utmost, till he found an opportunity of retorting the design upon herself to sufficient advantage: he answered with a great deal of coolness, that the case would be by no means parallel: that if a lady should honour him with a passion that could only have its rational source from such accomplishments as that gentleman was happy in possessing, he should rather condemn her taste, than take pride in the imaginary effects of his own merit.

'Eh! Badinage!' replies the lady, with infinite affectation—'Come, come, you know there is not a prettier fellow in town than yourself; and you very well know an unhappy acquaintance of mine is too sensible of it. I seriously
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'beg you to declare before this company, that you may not think of going back from it, what it is that you intend to do with her?'—'Every thing in the world,' Madam,' replied the youngster, 'but believe her. Your ladyship will pardon me,' continued he; 'but I cannot help observing, this is the last subject in the world that you are formed for shining on in conversation.'—'I find, Sir,' replies the lady, with a downcast look, and a very well affected sigh, 'you have really all that brutality in your heart that this other flighty monster only affects to put on.' The company were whispering, that Lady Bloom shone away gloriously this morning; that nothing ever came so near reality as this confusion; and were every one of them beginning to hate her heartily for her superior talents at this glorious art, when she continued, in a faltering tone—'Tis barbarous in you, Mr. Edwards, to be trifling on such a serious subject. Suppose, Sir, I were to tell you—' The manner in which she pronounced this broken sentence, added vastly to the applause of the company, and to their envy. Lady Sophist, out of all patience to be conquered thus openly in her favourite art, could not help hinting, that she wished they were not all hummed, except the young fellow. 'For my part,' says she, 'when art comes so very near nature, I shall always be apt to guess there is nature at the bottom.' The company had not time to deliver their sentiments on this interesting subject, before the youth, who now saw the opportunity he had all this time been waiting for, went up close to Lady Bloom, and in a whisper, which he took care all the company should hear, told her—'I am amazed, Madam, you will urge me in publick on a subject I have so honestly told you my heart about already. I know I am in the wrong; but of all womankind, charming as you are, you are the last I could think of with tenderness.'

It was not Mr. Edwards's business to wait for an answer to this declaration; he turned off upon his heel, and left the company without ceremony. Lady Bloom was mad with rage; but in hopes the company had not heard what had been said to her, and which it was by no means her business to repeat, she remained silent. The rest of the party were no fonder of talking about a thing

they did not wish to see placed in a better light; they dropped off one by one; and such hearty pains did they take to let the world into the secret they had just discovered at their morning visits, that there was not a card-table within the hundreds of St. James's, at which it was not perfectly known that evening that Lady Bloom was in love with a young Creole to desperation; and that he did not like her, nor would by any means be induced to visit her, or stay any where in her company.

CHAP. V.

CHARACTER OF A VERY AMIABLE LADY; WHOM THE READER WILL SEE MR. EDWARDS IS IN A FAIR WAY TO BE VERY WELL ACQUAINTED WITH.

IT may be remembered that, in the list of the party our hero met with in the Mall, we mentioned a lady whom we expressed our wonder at seeing in such company. Mr. Edwards began in reality, by this time, to look on his late flame, Lady Bloom, with all the contempt he had but affected at their last rencounter. The other celebrated belles of the party did not appear to him in a much more favourable light: but it was much otherwise in regard to this singular lady; her sensible discourse, her decent deportment, her amiable diffidence, and a thousand other good qualities, which those who know Miss Sedate—and, indeed, who is it that does not?—will know it is needless to mention, added to the artillery of her looks, which never failed to command the adoration they seemed not to desire to receive, had taken deeper hold of his heart than any thing he had yet met with in the European quarter of the globe.

We shall not presume to call his sensations, in regard to this lady, absolute love; perhaps that is a passion the human breast is capable of but once: certainly, all the emotions he had felt on these occasions among our women of face and fashion, were much inferior in their force and tenderness to those he had been inspired with by Miss Wentworth. From the time of his receiving the news of that lady's death, he had bid farewell to all thoughts of a passion like that which he had felt for her; but as he had

no intention to live among mankind not like one of the species, he had given way to every effort that seemed at all of kin to his first thoughts on this subject; and perhaps had been as much in love with Lady Bloom and Miss Sparkle, as a modern fine gentleman ever is in love with any thing.

His ideas of Miss Sedate arose to something considerably more like adoration than what he had felt on either of these occasions; and, if they did not come up to absolute love, they had a combination of desire and esteem that approached considerably near it.

He found means of enquiring after her of all the party in which he had met her, but he found not one of them, except Lady Bloom alone, knew any thing of her, and that she would not tell. He had with some difficulty got her name; and he was so assiduous in his enquiries in all parts of the town, and among all sorts of people, that he at length found it belonged to a daughter of a very eminent person in the philosophick world, and whose personal merit had raised him to the dignity of head of a body of men among whom points of this nature were disputed and determined.

Every body joined in giving her a character, that at once increased his admiration, and convinced him she was of all women the best formed for making a husband and a family happy. His fortune was such as her relations, he knew, could not object to; his reputed estate, such as must gain him an admittance every where. The lady's circumstances he learned, on enquiry, were such as his father would have no reason to be dissatisfied with. He resolved to marry, and he determined on this lady as the woman.

With all these previous considerations settled, he had determined on the next day for the ceremony of waiting on her father. In the evening before, he by perfect accident met with his friend again: to him he unboomed his whole plan; and he was extremely happy in finding this gentleman perfectly well knew the father of the lady, and could have given him all the information he had already been at such pains to obtain. He found, indeed, that he knew much more of the family than any body he had hitherto spoke with on the subject: he entreated him to inform him of every thing that he knew of it without

reserve; and Mr. Spence complied with his request in the following manner:

'Mr. Sedate, the father of the lady you intend your addresses to, is a man of family, character, and fortune. His reputation in the world, as a man of sense, is unexceptionable; and his estate is not less than three thousand pounds a year. The only failing in his moral character is, that he is easily imposed on by people whom he thinks well of; and, when misled, is incapable of being set right again; and the only one in his œconomy is, the engaging in an expensive office, which the world at this time are hardly in a humour to allow an honourable one. I give you these hints, that you may take care to be well with his friends, whom I will point out to you; and that you may not expect your mistress's fortune to be much enlarged by the savings of a man whom you do not see guilty of any extravagance.'

'There is an elder daughter of the family, a widow, who married indifferently, and who, in consequence of the irreconcilable temper of the father, will never be received again, or disturb the possession which this unmarried one has of his heart. He doats on her, and she deserves it. He would, I believe, be averse to any immediate proposal of marriage, from his mere unwillingness to part with her; but there is a way by which you may succeed. In order to court the lady with success, you must first court him; and, to court him with success, you must attack him on his weak side, his fondness for philosophy. Offer yourself, with your whole fortune in your hand, and you will be turned out of doors; but carry him a petrified cockle shell, or a dried toadstool, and you shall be received into his arms; and he will bestow the darling of his heart upon you, as the only medal worthy to reward such unequalled discoveries.'

Mr. Spence was indeed thoroughly acquainted with the family he talked of, and the advice he gave had all the appearance of reason on it's side. Whether he did not foresee some farther effect from it than can yet appear to the reader, or whether indeed he wished the young gentleman to succeed in his addresses to the lady or not, are secrets that may possibly be disclosed in the sequel of the history. The youth determined to follow

low his advice; but he trembled at the thought of appearing before such a master of a science he had never studied, in quality of an admirer of it. The friend who had advised him thus far did not desert him in this necessity: he engaged himself to furnish him with a subject, and put him in the way of knowing what to say about it; and even promised to set him on the best footing imaginable in the family, by making the acquaintance be of Mr. Sedate's own seeking. To this purpose he told him he would introduce him, on the next publick day, to a person in office, under this head of the Philosophick Body; where that gentleman sometimes condescended to visit, and where he would, if he missed seeing him, be accustomed, however, to philosophick discourses, by hearing all the eminent men of the body delivering their sentiments with great familiarity. The youth professed eternal obligation to his friend and patron; and they parted, for the first time, with knowing where they were to meet again.

CHAP. VI.

CHARACTER OF DR. SINGLEDOSE. SHORT MENTION OF MRS. SINGLEDOSE, AND THE PLAN OF THEIR PUBLICK ENTERTAINMENTS.

THE gentleman, whose publick day was to give our hero an opportunity of commencing philosopher, and meeting the father of his mistress by accident, was himself a *Primi Subsellii Philosophus*. He had many years enjoyed an office in the learned body we have already had several occasions of mentioning; but with this great advantage over his patron, that while that gentleman's finances paid the full price of his honour, this officer was paid for making himself ridiculous. He was a physician as well as philosopher: by long study and experience he had arrived at a perfection in the latter science equal to that he had in the former; and his utmost modesty could not suppress his pride in declaring that, as he unravelled all the intricacies of philosophy at one examination, so he cured all diseases by a single dose of his nostrums.

He had gone so far at one time, as to offer himself to families by the year, as physician; and to engage to cure them

of all diseases, one way or other, at a guinea a head, or, as the poet admirably expresses it—

' At one pound one per head, per ann. ye
' small
' And great, the Doctor kills or cures you
' all.'

But whether the world thought this was an imposition, as a single dose might be had for half that money, and every person in a family could not expect in reason to be sick every year; or whether the physicians, who saw the inevitable ruin of their profession by this scheme conspired against it, we know not; but so it was, that the ingenious gentleman never found opportunities of doing much good or harm on these terms.

The doctor, after some other ill successes of a like kind, determined to set out in a new way of acquiring business. Poetry and Painting had long been declared sister sciences; Philosophy and Physick he was perfectly convinced were no less so: to be eminent in one, he concluded would prove him not of the meanest rank in the other. His office in the supreme court of philosophick judicature gave him an indisputable claim to rank high on this subject: he took care to inform the world of his importance, by publishing his titles at full length, distinguishing himself as *associate* to this body that he had never seen, *fellow* of that community which nobody else had ever heard of, and *correspondent* of a certain very venerable old lady, to whom he had written a letter that she never answered.

His fame was no sooner blazoned in this manner to the world, than he established this publick day for the reception of his friends. Cards were dispersed to all parts of the town, expressing that Dr. Singledose gave tea every Tuesday afternoon at five precisely; and it being whispered about at the same time, that the seven sages of Great Britain always met at that place and hour, there seldom failed to be rather more company than there were chairs for in one apartment; and a crowd of female listeners about the keyhole of the door, that communicated with an adjoining one, especially on those nights when a hermaphrodite, or some other phenomenon which concerned the sexes, was to be the subject of disquisition; which the doctor's lady, a personage whom, though we have hitherto taken

taken no notice of, we may possibly have occasion to mention hereafter, never failed to give timely notice of about the neighbourhood, and among the circle of her acquaintance.

On one of these evenings it was, that Mr. Spence was to introduce his young friend to the acquaintance of Dr. Single-dose, and by his means to the whole learned world. As he was to present him as a lover of natural knowledge, he took no less than four days to instruct him in the terms and rudiments of the science; and having furnished him with a specimen, which was no other than a *dried whitening*, that had been part of the ship's stores, he assured him of the success of his undertaking.

CHAP. VII.

A CONVERSATION AT A PHILOSOPHICAL CLUB INTERRUPTED BY A VERY SURPRIZING INCIDENT.

A Very eminent and accomplished clergyman, I remember, has told me, that on his first introduction into a family of consequence, on which he had much dependence, he was informed, about two hours before the time of praying to the family, that this was to be done extempore, not according to the church form. He bestowed, as he tells the story, all the intermediate time in preparing his prayer: but, the moment the great bell gave the signal for his entering the chapel, every idea he had before formed deserted him; his thoughts were as utterly unprepared as if that had been the first moment of his having notice of his business, and he was forced to begin at random.

So fared it with our young philosopher at his first visit to this publick receiver of the wise. The four days of his preparation had been spent to at least as good purpose as the two hours of the reverend gentleman just mentioned, and he had got together as many words as the other had ideas: but no sooner did the weighty host take him by the hand, and welcome him to the regions of wisdom, than every syllable he had got by heart was obliterated; and he, who could before have rolled glibly over his tongue the *Titanoceratophyton* and *Hypophyllo-cono-carpodendron* of Boerhaave; the *Coriotragematadendros* of Plukenet; the *Carafes-*

ron and *Galeobdolon* of Rivinus; the *Clathroidastrum* of Micheli; the *Achrochordodendros* of Knaut; or the *Antastri-formipolyplatycarpoides* of Klein; the *Arbitochoutus* of Vaillant; and the *Stachisarpogophora* of Breynius; now could not have told that *bellis* was Latin for a daisy, or *fungus* for a mushroom, if the saving of his soul, or, what was much more to him at present, the gaining of his mistress, had depended upon it. He found it would be necessary for him to say little; and, venturing to tell the doctor that, as this was the first night of his having the honour of meeting such company, he should be a hearer only during the course of the evening, the master of the ceremony repeated the resolution to the company; who taking it as a tacit encomium on their own qualifications, readily accepted the excuse, and said many civil things about the fair preface such modesty gave of rising merit.

Mr. Edwards was, on the recommendation of Mr. Spence, who was a man of allowed judgment, now dubbed a philosopher; and was very regularly and methodically introduced to every member of the company, in their several ranks and orders; which (excepting for the deference paid to a foreigner of distinction in the first salute) was not according to title or seniority, but in consequence of the number of learned performances each had obliged the world with.

As our hero had before been informed of this right of priority in these meetings, he was strangely surprized at being first introduced to a gay, smiling, bold faced, powdered-periwig'd fellow, who had hitherto been talking of nothing but his Burgundy and his mistress; and not less so, to find the list closed with the doctor himself, who, though he had obliged the world so far as, many years before, to engage for a folio or two, had not thought it convenient yet to be at the pains of writing, or the expence of printing them; and who, though he had certainly had some sort of share in the publication of more books than any one since that time, at present valued himself principally on a folio collection of tobacco-papers, which he confessed, as he took his new friend by the hand, were not yet ready for the press, in the form in which he intended to favour the world with them.

The company, for this evening, consisted of a Spanish Count, attended by Madam

Madam *Le Comtesse*, and a led captain, whose mouth was drawn into a peculiar form by the frequent pronouncing of three words, *Cet illustre Chef*, which always made at least two-thirds of his whole conversation, though he never failed to seize the opportunity of a cessation on other parts, to describe the magnanimity of conduct, the hardships or distresses, of his *illustre* companion. Next to these sat the powdered doctor already mentioned, who had obliged the world with many volumes of all sorts, on all kinds of subjects; and had written just as well of any one, as of any other of them. At the upper end of the room stood an empty arm-chair for the father of our hero's mistress. The rest was filled somewhat indiscriminately, with philosophers, antiquarians, mathematicians, and mechanicks. A Scotch peasant produced a new orrery; a German mechanic, a table-fountain contrived to play in a desert, to the great entertainment, and bedabbling of every body present; and the doctor's son and heir, the model of a new invented mouse-trap. The audience consisted of the doctor's taylor; an Anabaptist preacher; a converted Jew who sold spectacles; an Atheist and two Roman Catholics; a blind fidler, who fully expected he should be restored to sight by the doctor's nostrums; and the master and mistress of a pamphlet-shop at Charing Cross, with whom his works, entire, were always to be met with.

The people who spoke beside the above-mentioned, were Mr. Storm, the inventor of a new religion; Mr. Farthing, a collector of a peculiar species of English coins; Mr. Sage, the author of a very egregious history of printing, in which one of Swift's prophecies is given as a specimen of the letter of one of our earliest printers; and a Maker of Bologna Sauces, who had discovered the longitude.

Mr. Farthing took the advantage of the first cessation on the part of the illustrious Spaniard, to declare to the company that, after having been now eight years in search of a *maidenhead*; after having been promised one by fifty of the common dealers in those commodities; after having had fifty counterfeit ones brought to him, all which he discovered to be cheats the instant he got into the legends; in short, after having ten times overpaid Mr. C—— ten times as much as a true one would have been worth, for

pretended ones; and, after having sought for one in vain among your pretended people of honour, he had at length met with a genuine one, in the possession of a cinder-lifter, upon one of the dung-hills behind St. Giles's, which he had taken possession of upon the spot for one and six-pence.

The antiquarian was in raptures, and some other of the company could not forbear licking their lips at the relation. Half a dozen of them were gathering at once about the happy man, to be let into more particulars of the story, when a dreadful thundering from the room above at once terrified and astonished the whole assembly: some imagined it the report of a chymical vessel, burst in one of the doctor's furnaces; others took it for the shock of a third earthquake, the noises of the two former having been evidently perceived over-head; a great proof of the propriety of the term by which they were expressed. The doctor turned pale as death, and plainly enough discovered that he understood it to be something more terrible than either; the Anabaptist declared it was a judgment for Mr. Farthing's prophane speaking; and the Atheist was discovered, after some moments, lying at his length under the table, and repeating the Apostles Creed. During this interval of silence and confusion, a servant had entered the room with terror in his aspect; but, before he could deliver his message, the company were thrown into a more violent consternation than the former, by a repetition of the same sound, only more vehement, and longer continued.

We doubt not, gentle reader, but thou art eager to know what this tremendous noise was; but as we do not use to make great preparations for trivial events, nor call in gods or devils to our assistance,

'Nisi dignus vindice nodus;'

thy patience must be suspended till, on so important an occasion as this, we begin a new chapter.

CHAP. VIII.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE TERRIBLE ALARM GIVEN IN THE LAST CHAPTER.

IT was a quarter after eight, in the month of October, when the company at Doctor Singledose's drum (who had

had patiently enough gone without their tea, on being informed that the lady of the house had gone out upon a visit, and had inadvertently locked up the cups) received the alarm of the sound which had broke in upon Mr. Farthing's important relation, and so utterly disconcerted the company at the end of the last chapter. The doctor, on this repetition of it, had, however, greatly calmed every body's terrors, by ordering the servant, who all this while stood trembling before them, to tell the gentleman above that he was engaged in such a manner with his friends, on a very serious subject, that he could not possibly come up just that minute, but would wait on him presently.

The company had scarcely time to congratulate themselves on the discovery that this noise was so vastly inferior to an earthquake in its violence and effects, when they had sufficient reason to find that discovery was hardly a true one. The door of the upper apartment clapped to with a violence that shook the whole fabrick; the stairs from their foundations shook beneath the rattling of hostile feet, that poured with scarce less rage or rapidity along them than the broken waves over the cataracts of the Nile; the door of the parlour in which they were assembled burst open, and in the middle of the company, before it was possible to conceive any body had entered the room, appeared the horrick front of Mrs. Singledose.

'What, you extravagant, ye-ye-ye-ye idle fool! because I won't let you have tea for your gossips, do you intend to keep 'em here all night to ruin me with fire and candle? Ye may be ashamed of yourselves, ye pitiful, beggarly crew as ye are; because you see a man is soft and foolish, to eat and drink him out of house and home in this manner! What good did any of 'em do you, I'd be glad to know, ye poor-spirited fool, that you dare not tell 'em of it? I know well enough you make all their books and their nonsense for 'em; and they would never get a halfpenny, if it were not for your brains: but what did they ever do for you, I ask you that? Did any of 'em ever take a single dose of your physick? or, if they did, I'll be hang'd if they ever paid for it. Go your ways, for a great Essex calf, as you always call yourself; you don't call yourself out

'of your name when you say so, take my word for it.'

She was proceeding in this torrent of eloquence; but a slap on the forehead, which she had given the peaceful doctor at the end of the last sentence, (whether it were meant as a chastisement, or as a piece of contemptuous dalliance, we will not presume to say) felled him as suddenly, as ever did the blow of a butcher's axe a more full-grown creature of the same species, to the ground. On this, the torrent of her revilings turned solely on the company. 'Now,' exclaims she, 'ye pitiful fellows, what will you all of you do for me and my children, if my poor husband is got killed among you? An honest pains-taking man as any in the parish, if it were not for such vermin as you are eating him up.'

The company were obliged to interfere at this period, to tell the lady that the violence of her action had thrown a Japan screen into the fire, which it was impossible for them to get out of the flames till she moved. The poor doctor, who, from the consolation of the relenting temper his wife expressed in the last sentence, had taken hope of reconciling all again, opened his eyes: but the word Japan was no sooner pronounced, whether any such word had any connection with the title of the book the doctor was to have published, or by whatever other combination of ideas it brought the book into the heroine's mind, I know not; but she instantly flew out upon the name. The honesty of her reviving husband vanished before it: and—'Aye,' says she, 'Japan, indeed! I'll japan ye, you scurvy fellow! I don't suppose there's one of these gentlemen here but what you have promised the book to, though you know well enough you never designed to publish it. Aye, aye, if you use your friends that support you, and recommend you, and put bread into your mouth, in this manner, I don't wonder your poor wife and children are treated no better by you!'

Matters were now growing to a more terrible height than ever, the heroine having seized upon the loose leg of a chair to execute vengeance on the prostrate doctor: but Mr. Spence interposed; and the whole company pleading in favour of the vanquished, and promising not to give her provocation again by repeating their visits, she at once laid down her weapon and her anger; and,

as they walked out of the door, led the peaceful doctor up stairs under her arm with great conjugal affection.

There are very few incidents, be they as disagreeable as they will to the parties more immediately concerned, that are not attended with favourable consequences to somebody. The hero of our story, who was at this time quite unprepared to speak of his dried whiting, found this an excellent excuse for his not so much as producing it. The doctor, unwilling to lose the information his visitor came, as he imagined, fraught with,

whispered him, just before they parted, that it would be a very acceptable thing to the whole body, if he would produce his specimen, and his observations on it, at their next full meeting, which was to be two days after. He parted with a promise of doing so; and by this means obtained that period of time for the farther improvement in his studies. As we shall not chuse to disturb him at them, we shall make that blank in our history a separation of this part of it into two books, though the story be continued.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

THE



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
MR. GEORGE EDWARDS,
A CREOLE.
BOOK THE FOURTH.

IN WHICH HE DOES NOT GET A BIT NEARER HIS MISTRESS THAN
WHERE WE JUST NOW LEFT HIM.

CHAP. I.

A MEETING OF A PHILOSOPHICK
BODY, AND THE ENTERTAIN-
MENT AFFORDED BY THE MEM-
BERS.

HE august body was as-
sembled: the clock had
struck five; the mace was
laid upon the table, and
the officers were seated in
their respective places,
when our hero was introduced to the
community, as a person who had a cu-
riosity to lay before them, and who would
accompany his shewing the specimen
with some reasonings upon it.

His terrors made him request, that his
share of the entertainment might be the
last produced; and, as this was readily
complied with, he had leisure to compose
his spirits before he was called upon, at
the same time that he was let into the
importance and reasonableness of the dis-
quisitions he was admitted to, by the fol-
lowing particulars, which were served
up in order.

A Melon was first shewn, remarkable

for it's size, it's weight being no less than
sixty-two pounds, and it's surface, not-
withstanding this, wholly like that of
other melons. Every member crouded,
to have it to say afterwards, that he had
touched so immense a curiosity; and the
gardener who had brought it, after it
had passed the critical examination of all
present, was dismissed with the thanks
of the body and a reward, and not with-
out the private admonitions of the door-
keeper to have a picture of it drawn by
the ingenious Mr. Hogarth, and to shew
it, as people do the Panopticon and
Colossus, approved by the Royal Society.

A very grave and learned member of
the body next produced an account of a
lady, who having laid her hand, in the
dark, upon something which she took
to be a rat, marked the child, with which
she was then big, with a robin-red-
breast.

It appeared, indeed, the next morn-
ing, that it was a robin that the lady had
touched; and we are informed, two of
the gentlemen who were present, are at
this time about to engage in a literary
dispute, which will probably be extend-
ed to some volumes, whether it ought to
have

have been the thing really touched, or the thing supposed to have been touched, that the child should have borne the impression of? In these curious disquisitions, we are told the seat of the soul, the means of the communication of it with the body, and the effects of imagination in wounding, tearing, and annihilating corporeal objects, will be very fully treated of.

The third article consisted of a letter from a learned German; who, finding that the literati of England were at this time petrification-mad; and having heard that they had already met with petrified hams, petrified legs of veal, petrified eggs, and petrified sturgeon; and thinking that nothing was wanting but the proper means of dressing these several bodies, in order to afford a truly philosophick entertainment; sent them word, that he had sent over, by the good ship *Hector*, some *petrified flames of fire*. He added, that he had been obliged to pay a considerable insurance against their burning out the bottom of the box in which they were sent, and by that means firing the ship; which, as well as the charge of a person employed to watch them, to prevent such accidents, he doubted not the body would repay with pleasure, in consideration of so curious and unheard of a fossil. The name of this curious commentator was John George Frederick William Charles Ernest Augustus Bruckman. This had been confusedly read among the *doctissimus's* and *celeberrimus's*, with which it stood intermingled at the top of the letter; but the name of the place of his residence, which was Wolfenbottle, standing at the bottom, where we usually put our names, with the word *scribebam* before it; the very accurate and intelligent Doctor Singledose read it in such a manner, that the thanks of the body were directed to be returned to the very learned and ingenious Doctor Scribonius Wolfenbottle, for this curious and valuable present, whenever it should be received.

After this, was produced an account of a Petropolitan nobleman, whom nature had intended for a man of weight; but who not chusing to be encumbered with more body than his favourite hunter could conveniently carry, had incisions annually made in his arms, legs, back, sides, and belly, and the fat carefully scooped out from every part of his body.

The last dish, furnished independently of our hero, was a letter from a young lady on her travels, giving an account of the buried city of Herculaneum: this laughed at all the former pompous stories from the same place, and destroyed the credit of the pictures so much boasted of; but, in return, it mentioned several particulars of the utmost consequence; such as Brussels lace of an exquisite pattern, made of the asbestos stone, and therefore unhurt by the fire and brimstone; a leg of mutton, that had evidently been raw when the destruction happened, but was compleatly well dressed by the subterranean fires; and, lest bread should be wanting to eat with it, a petrified quartern-loaf, with the baker's name upon it.

It appeared afterwards, that the first of the curious subjects produced this evening before this learned body, was a pumpkin, which the artful gardener had scratched the coat of while young; that, as to the second, it was not a bird called a robin-red-breast, but the shoulder of one Robin, a servant in the family, that the lady had leaned upon; that the main business of the learned German was to get an English watch, which, on his having given some slight hint that it would be agreeable to him, was sent by the first ship; and that, when his petrified flames of fire arrived, they were no more than two toad stools that had grown in an old chimney; and that the two last articles were no other than banterers from a very severe satirist, who had before laughed at the body for its credulity, and who had ventured wagers among his companions that they were not yet cured, but that these accounts would be well received among them. Our hero's communication came next in order; but that being by no means of a piece with these ideal discoveries, we shall reserve it for the subject of another chapter.

CHAP. II.

AN ICHTHYOLOGICAL DISSERTATION UPON A DRIED WHITING.

THE subjects mentioned in the former chapter, accounts of every one of which may be found in the minutes of the body whose discoveries we are celebrating, and the relations of

which, at large, we flatter ourselves will hereafter appear in their publications, having been discussed in this ample and entertaining manner; Mr. George Edwards was handed up to the table in form. He there produced the curiosity every body was so big with the expectation of seeing; and with it delivered a paper to one of the secretaries, who read it aloud in the following words—

“The animal, which I have the honour to lay before this learned and ingenious body, is a fish.

“Man has been defined to be, *animal bipes et implume*, an animal with two feet, and without feathers. A fish, on the contrary, is said to be, *animal apodum pinnis præditum*, an animal without any feet at all, and furnished with fins. Such is the received definition of this class of animals; but, to me, this appears shorter than it ought to be; and, with the permission of this honourable body, I would take the liberty of perfecting it in the following manner—

“*Piscis est animal apodum, pinnis semper præditum; vel bronchiis vel pulmonibus respirans, plerumque in aqua habitans, ibique vel solis pinnis vel flexuoso corporis impulsu simul natans, interdum vero in terram sponte egrediens, et quandoque in aere supra aquam ope pinnarum pectoralium volans.* Whoever will be pleased to consider the treatise of a very learned author, *De Piscibus in sicco viventibus*, and at the same time will observe, that this definition of mine excludes crabs, lobsters, and prawns, together with all kinds of shell-fish, while it comprehends eels, whales, sea-cows, and flying-fish, will, I presume, allow me the justice of it.

“Having thus established the characters of fish in general, we are to consider them as divided by nature into five classes. These I shall beg leave to express by terms borrowed from the Greek, calling them *Malacopterygii*, *Acanthopterygii*, *Branchiostegi*, *Chondropterygii*, and *Plagiuri*; expressing the different nature of their fins, the structure of the parts about their gills, and the horizontal or perpendicular situation of their tails.

“It will appear, gentlemen, that the subject before us is one of the first class of fishes, the *Malacopterygii*,

“which are distinguished from all the others, by their having the rays of their fins bony, but not pungent, *quarum radii ossei quidem sunt, sed nullo modo pungentes.*

“The head, gentlemen, you will be pleased to observe, is depressed, and it has seven bones in the membrane, covering the gills; it will therefore appear very plainly to you, that it is a *gadus*, the general characters of that genus being, that the head is either *catbetroplateous*, or *plagioplateous*; that the *branchiostege membrane* has seven bones of a cylindrick figure in it, and that there are either two or three fins on the back.

“From it's genus, I shall beg leave to descend to it's specifick names. Bellonius has called it, *merlangus*, a name which evidently confounds it with another fish. Mr. Ray, *asellus*, a denomination which puts one in mind of a *wood-louse*. Aldrovand calls it, *asellus minor*; and Rondeletius, *secunda asellorum species*; which names also, in my opinion, convey no better idea than that of a *little wood-louse*; or, a *wood-louse different from some one that the author had described before*. If I may take the liberty of giving it a name that may live in your collections, I shall call it, *Gadus dorso tripterygio, ore imberbi, corpore albo, maxilla superiore longiore*. The Danes, I find, call it *koller*; the Germans, *ein moll*; and the Swedes, *il, wistling*.

“From it's names, I shall take the liberty of proceeding to point out the most singular and remarkable circumstances of it's form. It's head, gentlemen, you may perceive, is of an irregular figure; it's back is convex, and it's a—e is remarkably near it's head. It's colour is white, except on the back, where it is grey; and the scales are very small and round: it's nostrils are large, and stand in the midway between the eyes and the extremity of the snout.

“It has several rows of teeth in the upper jaw, but only one row in the lower, and the teeth in this are unequal: in the anterior part of the palate it has a bony substance, covered with teeth, and forming the two sides of a triangle; and it has also two roundish and two oblong bones in the *fauces*, beset with teeth in the same manner,

"manner. What an amazing apparatus for tearing, grinding, and lacerating it's food!

"It's *linea lateralis*, gentlemen, you may distinguish, is of a blackish colour, and crooked; and there is a black spot near the root of each of the pectoral fins.

"Those fins themselves have twenty-one rays in each, and the middle one is longest and bifurcated: the ventral fins are placed more anteriorly than the pectoral ones; they have six ribs in each, and the second is the longest of these.

"Of the three fins on the back, the first is triangular, and has twenty-one rays in each; there are two *pinnae ani*—I beg leave to put it in Latin, gentlemen, to save a coarse word, which I have been obliged to use once already—and, finally, the *vertebrae* are in number forty and four.

"The *viscera* I had preserved, gentlemen, in a bottle of rum, for your inspection; but unfortunately, a debauched sailor, in the voyage, drank up all the spirit, and afterwards threw away the bottle, to prevent discovery. According to the notes which I took upon the spot, however, I find that the liver was white, and divided into two lobes; the spleen was triangular, and situated under the stomach; the ovaries, for it was a female, were oblong, and full of yellow ova; the air-bladder was oblong, simple, glutinous, and affixed to the spine; the pneumatic duct, by which the air is carried to this vesicle, had it's insertion in the upper part of it, and it's origination in the oesophagus. The heart was obtusely quadrilateral; and the stomach oblong, thick, reflex in it's lower part, and coronated with a number of *cæca* about the pylorus."

A perfect silence had been observed during the reading of this truly curious paper. At the end of it, the youth received the general applause of the body: he was immediately proposed for a member; and, what was much more to his purpose, had the honour of the particular thanks of the father of his mistress, and was invited to his house.

The address with which the young author had concealed the English name of his fish, while he told the Danish, German, and Swedish, as well as the

learned ones, left his audience no suspicion of it's being a whiting; and their utter unacquaintance with the authors who treat on these subjects, gave them no idea that one Petrus Artedus had talked much to the same purpose. They broke up as thoroughly satisfied with this last part of their entertainment as with any of the former; they gave orders for the paper to be printed; and begged the proprietor of the curious specimen to let their engraver wait upon him, to take a drawing of it, that a copper-plate figure might be exhibited of so curious a fish in their works.

CHAP. III.

THE CONVERSATION AT DR. SINGLEDOSE'S RENEWED. CHARACTER AND HISTORY OF MR. STORM.

THE company began, after this, to file off by degrees: but Dr. Singledose, who was now out of office for the night, made up to as many of his late company as were present, which was very nearly all of them; and with great earnestness kept them together to hear his apology. The good doctor was entering on a studied harangue, in which he would have treated largely of the Xantippes of the several ages, of the government of husbands, and of the virtues of patience and resignation; but he was cut short in it by the Anabaptist, who asserted, that whatever might be the source of the doctor's domestic broils, this late one had been an evident judgment on them, for listening to the obscene discourse of that deluder of virgins, Mr. Farthing. 'Deluder of a fiddlestick's end!' replied the antiquarian; 'I was not talking of the things thou thinkest about. I must inform thee, that there are a species of coins called Traders, a kind of halfpence, that were in use an age or two ago, and which every tradesman had permission to coin for himself, to be of use in change, only marking them with his name, and that of the place he lived in, as a promise to take them again as money on demand. I have, with long application, you are to know, collected Traders of all the principal places in Berkshire; but, till a week ago, I never had one of the town of Maidenhead, in that county, when

‘ when I purchased this, as I told you, at that time.’ So saying, he produced, to the great admiration and improvement of all present, the coin purchased of the cinder-girl before-mentioned.

The preacher was abashed; the company enjoyed the jest in silence, except Mr. Storm, who, after very deliberately scratching his head, and then drawing his fingers through his lank locks, in form of a four-toothed comb, declared, he never knew a person whose zeal did not, at one time or other in his life, make a fool of him. Mr. Storm thought he had said enough for one evening, and not being of a disposition to throw away any thing, he retired without ceremony, to make himself a reputation, by his next good speech, in some new company.

The preacher looked a little foolish after the defeat; but the Atheist immediately gave him his revenge of the victor, by relating to the company the following history of his hate to the clergy.

‘ Mr. Storm, you are to know,’ says he, ‘ is a man of a moderate fortune in the country; he has inherited from nature an excellent constitution, and a very uncommon share of understanding; but some cruel Phyllis, in his younger days, jilted him out of the love of the whole sex, and indeed of the whole world: he retired immediately on this from London to his estate, where he devoted himself to reading, and calculated his whole income and his expences in such a manner, as not to save a farthing a year, nor to run as much behind-hand.

‘ He had lived in this manner half a year, when the parson of the parish made him a visit, to ask for his tythes: he was struck dumb with the unexpected demand; he found it larger than he could have imagined, even after he had recollected that it must be a due. He offered a compromise with the churchman, but it was refused; a law-suit was commenced; and, after various hearings, it was given wholly in favour of the rector.

‘ Mr. Storm could not but submit to the sentence, but he would by no means acquiesce in it: he declared open war against the parson, and the whole church that he belonged to; and set up, in mere revenge, a new religion of his own.

‘ Every tree in the parish, on the next

‘ Saturday, had a written invitation stuck upon it, to every inhabitant to come to the New Chapel, commonly called the Hall-house, and hear a sermon preached by Mr. Storm. The novelty carried two-thirds of the parish to him, and the clergyman felt the preference given to his antagonist very severely. The bills of invitation were stuck up again for the next Sunday; but whether it was that the charm of novelty was now wanting, whether the former discourse had not pleased them, or whether the antagonist had used any unfair method with his parishioners, had thundered in their trembling ears damnation, or whatever might be the cause, too sure it is, that the new preacher had not a single hearer.

‘ The triumphs of the priest, on this, were too great to be borne: the new preacher determined on finding some expedient to call back his flock, which had deserted him; and at length hit on the very lucky one of adding to his next bills, that whoever came to Mr. Storm’s chapel for the future, were desired to stay and dine there on beef and pudding. The stratagem did not fail of success, whom not the word of the Lord could get together; the loaves and the fishes summoned with irresistible power; the very third share of the company that had fallen to the church in the former division, now forsook it; every man, woman, and child, went regularly to Mr. Storm’s chapel; and he had the triumph to know, that his antagonist was preaching all the while to the pews and benches.

‘ This perfect victory on Mr. Storm’s side continued six months, and would undoubtedly have lasted till this time, had not the new preacher now flattered himself that he had thoroughly converted the hearts and souls of his hearers to his persuasion; and ventured to try whether he could not bring them together by the mere force of his doctrine, without the allurements of a dinner. He told them from the pulpit his resolution of continuing to feed their souls with his admonitions; but that, as to bodily food, they must get it as they used to do. On the next Sunday, he mounted the rostrum as usual, at the appointed hour; but, alas! there had been a week to consider upon

upon it, and the consequence of this was an universal resolution in favour of the old religion; the chapel was as empty as the church had of late been, and the parson triumphed in his turn over his thoroughly routed antagonist. From this time matters have gone on there in their old channel again; the boards that made the seats now serve to contain the squire's hogs; the tressels on which they were laid, have found their way under the washing-tubs and beer-barrels again; the pulpit is re-converted into its original state of a writing-desk; and the hall serves, instead of blasphemy and nonsense, to hear, after dinner, every day of the villainy of parsons, and the miseries of a nation that is church-ridden.'

CHAP. IV.

AN ODD INTRODUCTION OF A VERY SINGULAR CHARACTER.

THE contempt in which our hero held the father of his mistress, the whole philosophick body under his direction, and even philosophy itself, could be equalled by nothing but the adoration in which that body held him. A motive very different from philosophy had, however, carried him among them; that motive subsisted; and he did not find the charms of the daughter at all impaired by what he now saw of the father. He determined to make the utmost of his present success, before a discovery (which indeed he had no reason in the world to dread) should rob him of his merit; and had resolved on visiting in the family the next morning.

On his arrival at home from this meeting of the Philosophick Body, he found on his table the following laconick message, written on a very curious French card—

'MRS. Spadille has a polite rout to-night; if you'll come, you'll meet with somebody that will be very glad to see you. You are known, and will need no formal introduction.'

It was now but about eight; Mrs. Spadille's was easily found; and our hero, though he was in no great humour for any engagement, rather than refuse an

absolute challenge, walked in. He found about twenty ladies, and half as many men there: they were just sat down to tea, and he took his place among them. Every body was complaisant to him, particularly as they saw him a stranger; he joined in the conversation on common topics, and had at length got into a private party of four, who were talking over the newest scandal of the town: he found himself in very agreeable company, but he could not discern in any body's face any peculiar business with him.

He was ruminating on the meaning of this whimsical adventure, when a very agreeable voice was heard, displaying all its excellences under the advantage of one of Palma's newest songs, as the lady to whom it belonged was tripping up stairs. The door, in an instant, was thrown open with a jaunty violence; and the lady who had been heard was now seen tripping with a consummately agreeable negligence into the room.

Mrs. Spadille was, at this time, making the tea at such a distance from the door, that nothing less than a fling, that almost shook it from the hinges, could have forced it to her: the extremity of the lock, however, at this instant, just reached the edge of the table that was before her, and tipped it over. In an instant, a scene of confusion arose, scarce to be described by words; the whole equipage was scattered over different parts of the floor; the saucers split; the cups, as many of them as were whole, were seen rolling about; the tea, half mingled with the cream, formed a party-coloured deluge in one part of the floor; along another ran the water sending up its curling clouds of smoke; and between them a stream of liquid fire from the lamp, spreading like one of the rivers of the infernal regions, and sending up a blue flame all the way that it ran: in one place you might see a beau aiming a whiffing puff at the flame, to extinguish it; in another, a lady treading it out, and setting fire to the fringe of her under-petticoat; and in a third, an unlucky fellow, who had been too near the fall of the boiling cataract, making faces, and examining his scalded shins: but infinitely the greatest sight of horror was afforded by Mrs. Spadille herself, who being dressed in a chintz sacque, had first received the flaming ruins of the lamp on her lap, whence she had

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not thrown it time enough to prevent it's setting her on fire. She was now blazing to the very shoulders; and a gentleman, who before sat next our hero, was employed in extinguishing the fire, by covering it with his unbuttoned waistcoat.

The lady who had occasioned all the mischief walked very deliberately up to the vacant seat at our hero's elbow, threw herself into it, and, lolling back with her arms across, entertained herself with whistling the *Black Joke*. Mr. Edwards could not but exclaim to her—'Good Heaven, Madam, how unconcerned you sit all this while!'—'Aye,' replied she, raising her elbows, half stretching herself, and gaping as she spoke—

- * Like Helen in the night, when Troy was sack'd,
- * Spectatress of the mischief she had made.'

Our hero's admiration was scarce at it's height on this romantick occasion, when the lady, with an utter unconcern as to every thing about her, turned the finest pair of eyes in the world directly upon him, and said, with a smile of affected indifference—'I fancy you was beginning to wonder, by this time, how you came here.'—'I am very glad,' replied he eagerly, 'to find any body that is able to inform me.'—'Hush!' says the lady, with a look of infinite sagacity, 'I have done all that mischief, to give the people something else to do than to observe us: I take you to be a gay frolick, jovial fellow, and I have a mind to be acquainted with you.' The lady having explained herself thus far, was at leisure to make her apologies to the company. She walked up first to Mrs. Spadille, begged her pardon for the mischief she had occasioned, and insisted on her permission to replace every thing she had destroyed; then comprehending the company in one circular curtsy, she begged pardon of them all for the confusion her strange inadvertence had thrown them into; and returning to her place, under pretence of a particular excuse to Mr. Edwards, to whom her back had been turned during the general humiliation, she bid him play two rubbers at whist, and then come home and sup with her.

Our hero was too heartily in love with his new flame, Miss Sedate, to have

easily fallen into a second affair of the same kind; but there was something so irresistibly commanding in the manner of this lady, that he found it impossible not to obey, nay, not to obey with rapture. Prudence also dictated one consideration to him on this occasion, which, though it may not plead very greatly in his favour with the ladies, certainly will be allowed it's weight with the people of reason of the other sex, or even of that sex, after a certain interested age. He looked upon his late engagement as one that would be attended with almost infinite difficulties, and which, though he could be successful against them all, yet must necessarily take a great deal of time to bring to a happy conclusion. In the mean time there was a ready *Indiana*, (take care, gentle reader, that there is not more justice in this expression than thou art at present aware of) who would soothe the pangs of delay, and of his impatience on the other's part; and whom it would be easy for him, at any time, from some such attack upon another, as she had now made upon himself, to take occasion to quarrel with, and be rid of, without any blame on his own part.

If people always knew the rank in which they stood in one another's thoughts, it would prevent a vast deal of that mischief that happens from their being too well acquainted, and thinking too favourably of one another. Could this woman of pleasure and experience have imagined it possible that she was intended to be the tool, the dupe of a raw West-Indian boy, the wanton for his leisure, to toy and waste an hour of idle time with, without possessing any the least share of his heart, or even of his good opinion, in what extreme contempt would she have held herself, him, and all the world! This was a secret that dwelt, however, in his breast alone, and indeed was not of quite that duration there, that his fixed sentiments on the subject, at this time, seemed to presage.

The appointed period arrived; the games were over, and the lady took her leave with little ceremony. The lover was out of the party, and waited on her to her chair: she slipped a pocket-book into his hand, in the first leaf of which was her direction; and bidding him not to follow her so immediately as to give suspicion, sunk into her chair, and bade the slaves go home. Mr. Edwards returned

turned to the party, eager to know something of his new acquaintance; but the utmost he could learn from the terms *mad creature, strange devil of a woman*, and the like, that passed among the company, was, that there was nothing new in her behaviour that evening, but that he should find her just the same gay, galloping mistress, to the end of the chapter.

That she was not a common strumpet was evident, from the company he met her in: that she was not under the protection of any particular person, was as evident, from her engaging him to sup at her lodgings; and yet, that there could be any difficulty in sleeping there, seemed as absurd to imagine, from her whole deportment, and from the nature of their acquaintance. That they met in half an hour, is certain; and that their meeting was not without its consequences, is as sure; but, eager as the reader is to know what they were, he must have patience to the next chapter.

CHAP. V.

A VISIT FROM MR. EDWARDS TO MISS ODDLY, FROM WHICH THE READER WILL FORM SOME ODD PRESAGES.

TEN thousand strange conjectures did Mr. Edwards frame in his mind as he went to the appointed rendezvous; and as many questions of the utmost importance did he, from moment to moment, put to himself, without being able to answer any one of them. He was in the utmost uncertainty, whether she had a house or a lodging; whether he should be received in a parlour or a dining-room; and whether the bed was linen or damask; but, to do him justice, whether he should be happy in it, or not, was not one of them. In short, reader, if thou hast ever known the delight of being danced along in a chair to the apartments of a fine woman, who was almost a stranger to thee, but with whom thou wert very well assured thou wert in an hour or two to be better acquainted; thou mayest have some idea of what was Mr. Edwards's situation, as he was carried down St. James's Street, across the Park, and up to the back-door of a very handsome house, the front of which was in Duke Street,

I have the charity also to hope, that, if thou hast felt all these expectations upon as good an occasion, thou hast succeeded as well in the event as our hero did.

Mr. Edwards was no sooner out of his chair, than he was received at the bottom of a terrace by a footman with a white flambeau, who lighted him across the garden, and shewed him the way into a hall, in which there stood four more fellows in the same laced uniforms, one of whom preceded him with a couple of wax-candles up a painted stair-case, and threw open the door of a dining-room, the furniture of which was worth about a thousand pounds.

Our lover's ideas had indeed been gradually enough raised to the pitch they were now at; but, notwithstanding, the full torrent of his surprise was now too much for him to bear: he hesitated a moment at the door, and after muttering something to himself, that sounded like—'Miss Sedate, you may go to the devil if you please,' he entered the chamber of joy.

I know not how it is that the ideas of magnificence are connected with those of love, but unquestionably they are so. The woman, that we would bestow a smile of approbation on in a lutestring night-gown, we look up with reverence to in embroidery; and her, whom we held in the rank of a pretty girl while in quality of Miss Somebody, we adore as a divinity, as soon as we are informed that the terms Right Honourable are tacked to her name.

Mr. Edwards, from the nature of his acquaintance with this lady, could never have any idea of Wife enter into his heart; and his circumstances were too affluent to bear the slightest thought of his being profited by her fortune; yet, so it was, that every idea he had formed of her charms, and of the pleasure he should have in her acquaintance, rose in proportion to those he now entertained of her condition; and though, but half an hour before, the turn of a straw might have determined his accepting or not accepting her invitation, a thousand cart-horses would now scarce have been able to drag him away from her.

After so much said of the heart and situation of the hero of the present scene, it may be time to come to the mention of the heroine of it. Miss Oddly, for such was the lady's name, was the only

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daughter of a man of immense fortune, who had died while she was an infant; and she was now just arrived at the age in which the will of her father, and the laws of her country, had thought her of discretion enough to be trusted with the management of that, and that of herself, without a guardian. She was a tall, well-proportioned, and extremely genteel woman, but not handsome; her features were tolerably regular, and her complexion, though dark, not yellow; her eyes were, indeed, the finest the world ever saw, and her teeth far from bad ones; yet, some way, there was an unluckiness in the putting her face together, that prevented a possibility of any body's thinking her a beauty. There are many faces allowed to be very fine ones all together, which yet don't bear taking to pieces; on the contrary, Miss Oldly's was of a kind, that never shewed so much merit as when examined by parts; and consequently she was one of those few women who appear much handsomer on a nearer and repeated examination. Whether it was owing to this circumstance in nature, or to the change of Mr. Edwards's thoughts, from the grandeur of the scene, we shall not presume to say; but thus much must be acknowledged, that he thought her vastly more like an angel now than he had done an hour before.

She rose from a velvet sofa, at the upper end of the room, to receive him; ran to the very door with vast alacrity and cheerfulness to meet him; seized his hand between both her's, with perfect familiarity; and, squeezing it very tenderly, told him, she was extremely glad to see him: 'You think me a strange wild creature, I know, Mr. Edwards,' says she, 'in all this, but you won't like me the less for it when you have known me longer.' Our hero was raising his lips, to make the most feeling return for so free and good-natured a reception; but he stuck, as it were, half-way, on discovering, at this instant, a gay genteel young fellow, whom the lady had left on the corner of the sofa she had risen from. The lady saw his confusion, she tossed up her head with an engaging indolence, and said, with the most consummate indifference—'O! don't put yourself under any constraint in regard to him; that gentleman, you are to know, Sir, would fain do me the great honour of becoming my hus-

band.' She then introduced them to one another in form; begged them, for her sake, to become acquainted, and, throwing herself into the middle of the sofa, pointed to the two corners, as at their service.

A vast deal of unrestrained conversation, and, to do it more than justice, of real genuine wit, passed in consequence of this, before, at, and after supper. The clock struck two, and three, unregarded; toward four, the gentlemen began to find out, that they had mutually resolved to sit out one another: the lady, however, at the next signal of the clock, put a period to the contest, by telling them it was high time they should make an end of their visit.

CHAP. VI.

MR. EDWARDS AND HIS NEW ACQUAINTANCE COME TOWARDS AN EXPLANATION.

IF our hero had been somewhat smitten with the gaiety and freedom of this lady, and half in love with her person, at his first interview, in which he had conceived very different ideas from his present ones, about her circumstances and situation, he was now perfectly fixed to her; and he gave way, in very prudence, to his fondness, as, he flattered himself, he saw it would not be a great while that he should be doomed to languish in expectation.

The company of a third person, and that a professed rival, could not have been very agreeable to him on any conditions; but least of all so, under the circumstances in which he fancied this lady and he had met: he made no doubt of her being as ready as himself for every extravagance of love and folly; and he determined on the next afternoon as the utmost period of their mutual expectation.

He visited her so early after dinner, that he knew she could have no other company. She received him with all the joy and familiarity of the night before; and he, who thought he read every good-natured intention that he could wish in her eyes, ventured, pretty early in the afternoon, to grumble a little about the impertinent staying of the last night's visitor; and to intreat she would prevent a possibility of so vexatious an accident
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a second time, by giving orders to her servants to say she was not at home, whoever came.

The lady answered, with a stare, accompanied with a *naïveté* of aspect (for there is no English word that can express such an innocent ignorance of face) which puzzled our hero's apprehension to know what to make of it. After a silence of some moments, in which, indeed, it was the lover's business, if he had known his business, to have spoken, he said with a look of contemptuous astonishment—'Why, my dear, dear, little Lovy, what, in the name of wonder, can you and I have to talk of, that all the world may not hear! Upon my honour, I am not afraid of owning I like you; and I would fain suppose, you need not be ashamed of being in love with me.'—'Two people,' replied she, 'in my opinion, are the very worst party in the world; but come, sit down like a good boy, and we'll make the best we can of it, till somebody has compassion enough to come in, and cure us of being tired of one another.'

Mr. Edwards was thoroughly plagued and mortified at this cavalier speech: it was not his business, however, to quarrel; and he submitted to it. They passed the afternoon and the evening in great gaiety, alone: Fortune was favourable enough to them, to have provided for this, by keeping every body from the door; but the lover, as men never fail to put the best-natured construction possible on every thing that regards the woman they like, made no doubt but this was by her order, though she had pretended not to design it, and had so happily counterfeited a surprize on his asking her to do what she had done already.

Supper came up; and our hero, perfectly satisfied that he should not be turned out of doors that night again, and sufficiently determined not to go out on any other terms, made a merit of keeping the distance the lady obliged him to, and had ventured to say, in excuse for some good behaviour that he could not help, that great delicacies were to be fed on, not tasted; and that no man in his senses would wish to eat ortolans off a trencher.

About the middle of supper, when the lover's heart was in much that sort of state that a bridegroom is, who has married for love, when he is pulling his

shoes off, a rap at the door proclaimed the approach of a visitor. 'Be denied, dear, dear creature, be denied;' exclaims our hero with great rapture. The lady very coolly told him, it was impossible: that her doors were always open to good company, and that no other ever came to them; and, giving him a gentle pat on the hand, asked him in a whisper, how he could be such a bear, to hint such a thing before the servants?

Whatever distress the former part of this speech had involved him in, the latter made him ample amends for: he construed it into an absolute declaration of her being willing to do every thing but expose herself, and was reconciling his thoughts to the incident, vexatious as it was, by assuring himself so late a visit could be but a short one; when the person entered the room, and proved to be no other than the honourable lover who had, as Mr. Edwards understood it, spoiled all the sport the night before.

His aspect would have spoken his discontent too plainly for the misunderstanding it, had not the lady addressed the gentleman who had just entered, with all her natural familiarity and vivacity—'You a lover indeed! never presume to tell me of it again; never to see me since this time last night! Why, here's this polite creature has been courting me these six hours; upon my life, I have not had a more agreeable *tête à tête* these seven years. You and I are generally insipid after the first quarter of an hour; you must learn of him, if you ever think to charm me.—Do, my dear Edwards, in pity to me, teach the horrid creature to be tolerable.'

Our hero, whose attention was all this while at the utmost pitch, now saw the whole affair in a new light; he concluded, by the time of this visit, by his finding the same person there at that hour the night before, though it was evident the lady had not been herself at home half an hour, and by the perfect unconcern she evidently gave herself, as to all her words and actions, before him; that the terms Husband and Honourable were mere cant, used to disguise a connection of another kind; that the sending him away the night before was pure grimace; and that, in short, he was an humble lover, supported by the lady, for the amusement of her softer hours.

Mr. Edwards had not disguise enough in his nature to cover either his suspicions or his uneasiness from them: he grew dull, the lady saw it; she rallied her other lover, for coming in so opportunely, to spoil the best company in the world; and made this an excuse for dissolving the party earlier than ordinary, but not without telling Mr. Edwards, that she insisted upon seeing him the very first moment that he was in a good humour again.

The lover retired to his bed, little doubting but that his rival slept in Miss Oddly's, and resolutely determined that he would do so the night afterwards. He visited her, as he had done before, and was disappointed, as he had been before; he repeated his visit, and his disappointment was repeated: he spent a fortnight in this dangling way, every day expecting the completion of his expectations, and every day perfectly satisfied, that accident, cursed accident alone, not any want of inclination on the lady's part, had prevented him.

In this persuasion, if any body could have read the sentiments of his heart about Miss Oddly, they would have declared her an infamous strumpet; and whoever had seen her reception of him, and of half a dozen more people who visited her, would have declared her mistress of every one of them. Few young fellows have the absence of vanity in such a degree, as to deny a suspicion of this kind, because it is false; most have dissingenuity and villainy enough (for the last word expresses it better) to boast the conquest they find it impossible to make; and thus, in this great world of scandal, a thousand reputations are sacrificed through inadvertence and vanity, for one that is lost, because there has been real ill to occasion it.

CHAP. VII.

IN WHICH MR. EDWARDS AND MISS ODDLY ABSOLUTELY UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER.

MR. Edwards, convinced at length that it was impossible for him to do any thing either at the lady's house, or at his own, (for she had visited him with great freedom, and had always laughed at his attacks there, as much as in her own apartments) determined on

a new plan: he attacked her at the last masquerade at Ranelagh, with his usual freedom and gaiety, but without any thing of that wild-fire, that too often, in their *tête à tête* parties, used to point out somewhat too plainly the magazine of mischief it was leading to. He found her in a very gay, and very good humour, full of ease, and wholly void of suspicion.

He had experience enough of the sex to know, that the first victory has all the difficulty; that after this, coyness and resistance are at an end; and, in consequence of this consideration, he came to a very prudent resolution of submitting to 'taste 'an ortolan on a trencher,' according to his own phrase, for the first time, that he might eat it off of plate or china as frequently as he pleased afterwards. He fixed on one of the tents in the garden for the scene of his rapture; and had nothing to give him a moment's uneasiness about the prosecution of his project, but his inexperience in our public diversions, and an alarm raised by the sight of the centinels, who were posted at the doors of these places of retreats.

He walked fifty times round and round one of these, that was pitched in an obscure part of the garden, and was extremely fit for his purpose, examining with great attention the face of the centinel: at length, determined to know the worst, rather than run any risk of a disappointment, he walked up to him, and telling him he did not like the appearance of armed men in a place of diversion, asked him what he was set there for? The fellow very readily answered, that he was posted there to prevent indecencies: the word might have deterred a man less bent upon the execution of his project than Mr. Edwards now was from farther enquiry; but he went on to tell him—'Sir, there is a lady in the room, that I have occasion to speak with in private; if we should come in to this tent, you would not let any body else come in and interrupt us?'—'No, to be sure, Sir,' replied the centinel; 'I hope I know my duty better.'

Happy in this certainty, the lover re-entered the room; he soon found his mistress; he complained of the smell of the provisions in the eating-rooms; and persuading the lady she was hungry, though she could not eat under such disadvantages, he ordered a couple of chairs into
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this tent; where there was already a table, and sending some cray-fish, a cold chicken, and some wine, he rather led her in, than asked if she would go. Distrust was not in the nature of Miss Oddly, and fear was yet more a stranger to it. She was not without thoughts that this was a very wrong thing she was doing, but she would not give them leave to plead against the proposal: it was a whim, and, as such, it had irresistible attraction for her.

The lover, on his part, had shut up the eyes and ears of the sentinel with a guinea: the object of his desires was alone, defenceless, and in his power, and he would not have given six pence to assure him of the victory. He began with his usual addresses, he proceeded to some bolder hints than he had ventured to give before, and, at length, he was using the eloquence of arms. The lady did not see, at first, what a situation she had brought herself into; and, when she did, she was as far from seeing how she should get out of it. She very prudently considered, that resistance could never save her: what was there left for her then but compliance? She hardly pretended to guard against his efforts, till they grew too violent for decency; but then she drew back a step or two, and, with perfect composure and great good-nature in her countenance, told him—‘My very resolute lover, I don’t know that I ever told you it should come to this; but if I had, I do assure you, just now it is impossible.’

There is not a man in the world that would not rather have his mistress with her inclination, than against it. Our youth understood the refusal as the lady intended he should; and assured himself that the difficulties were now all over, and that he might enter the town at discretion: he gave up the present evening at her demand, and they finished their supper with great harmony. The gaiety of spirit the consent of his mistress had given Mr. Edwards, made him more brilliant, more agreeable, than usual, during the remainder of the night; every body envied the lady her lover, as much as they did him his mistress; and, about five, he handed her to her chair, and, to prevent suspicion of their future meetings, at her earnest request, returned to the company.

C H A P. VIII.

TWO LOVE-LETTERS IN A NEW STYLE.

THE utmost stretch of our lover’s genius was employed the next morning, to inform the lady in a letter how impossible it was to tell her how happy she had made him. He was surprised that he received no answer to it. He called on her in an hour afterwards, and heard she was out: he wrote to her to complain of his hard fate, and had the hard fate to receive no answer; he visited her, to reproach her with her ingratitude, and did not find her at home; in short, he spent four days in repeated calls, messages, and letters, before he found out that the lady had resolved never to see, hear, or think of him any more.

He cursed his stars on the discovery, and, a minute and a half afterwards, he blessed them again. Miss Sedate, who had never in all this period once entered into his thoughts, now appeared before his imagination in all her charms again; nay, we will not venture to assert, that she did not gain some additional ones from the disdain of her rival. The lover congratulated himself on the disinterested air with which he could now visit her father: he determined on doing it instantly, and ordered his valet to prepare for dressing him to the best advantage.

His hair was powdered, his heart full of joy at the thought of his intended visit, and his face dressed in smiles of security; when, as he was getting into his chariot, and had given the word for Queen Square, the equipage of Miss Oddly passed by, and the lady gave him a very polite flying nod. Whether she meant this in contempt, or in very civility, we shall not take upon us to determine; but certain it is, that the lover returned it by a bow to the very ground: the colour left his face, and the thoughts he had before been so full of, his heart: he drew back into the house; ordered the coachman to put up; and, in the eagerness and uncertainty of his soul, determined to write to her. He knew by the hour, and the way she went, whither she was going; he could not but think it worth while to call her back, if
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in his power: he knew complaints and intreaties would only make him the object of her contempt, perhaps, of that of half her acquaintance; he summoned up all his gallantry, and dispatched the following cavalier letter after her—

‘MADAM,

‘YOU looked just now as if you was willing I should come and see you. Upon my word, I shall be very happy if you’ll let me. If not, your own pleasure be obeyed; but, for old acquaintance sake, do me the little favour of letting me know it. I am, very sincerely, with a great deal of esteem, your obedient humble servant,

‘G. EDWARDS.’

It was with a painful impatience that Mr. Edwards waited the return of his messenger, but it was not very long that he was kept in it. The lady, who was always as much at home in other people’s houses as her own, no sooner read the billet, than she ordered pen and ink, and, making a polite apology to the company, in which the words Money, Business, and Importance, had their peculiar emphasis, she wrote the following answer—

‘SIR,

‘TO do you justice, I must own your letter an original. There is a happy familiarity in it; and I think great reason. You see I give it the applause it deserves; I suppose you meant no more from it. I would not pay so ill a compliment to your discernment, to say you mistook my looks: I know you only banter me, for putting on an appearance of civility to a man I ought to hate and despise. Such are your merits, but your sentence is milder: I shall only forget you. Remember that we are strangers, and you will do every thing in your power that can oblige

‘E. ODDLY.’

CHAP. IX.

OUR HERO RECEIVES VERY UNEXPECTEDLY A FRESH SUPPLY, BEFORE HE WANTS IT.

THERE is no circumstance of life in which a man so much feels the advantage of having, as the vulgar phrase

runs, *two strings to his bow*, as in a love affair. He who, if he had but one mistress, would perhaps hang or drown himself in consequence of her cruelty, while he has two, is always sure to make this most terrible of all misfortunes, as it is usually supposed, turn infinitely to his advantage: instead of taking a pair of oars for London Bridge, with his pockets loaded as heavily as those of the facetious Mr. Pipes were by a brother novel-monger of the present age, in revenge to the insolence of a chairman; instead of making the noose in the fatal garter, that very garter the relentless fair, in happier days, had employed her delicate fingers in knitting for him, he seeks the mansions of the rival beauty, throws himself at her feet with a redoubled ardour, his languishings for the other mistress all turn into tenderesses to this, and he owes his success, where it is worth having, to his disappointment, where it would have been a misfortune to have succeeded.

Such is the general course of slighted love, where there is another object in readiness: but, gentle reader, remark that we are speaking general truths only in this place; and if thou shouldst, in thy own great sagacity, chance to apply them to the present circumstance of our story, thou wilt do more than we meant to bid thee, and the errors thou leadest thyself into, be they all on thine own head.

All that we mean to infer from this digression, is, that Mr. Edwards, having another mistress in Petto, bore the loss of the former with somewhat more heroism and unconcern than he probably would have done, had it fallen upon him at a time when he was more unprovided.

There needed but little sagacity to discover, that he had thoroughly, perfectly, and for ever, lost his former love: the resolution was to secure the other as soon as he could. We have already had occasion to observe, that though Miss Oddly had many accomplishments, beauty was not of the number. We are apt to believe that, if it had, it would have lost much of its merit, at the present period, with Mr. Edwards: nothing takes off so much from a woman’s personal charms in the eyes of her lover as his being angry with her, unless it be her being angry herself. Miss Sedate’s
natural

natural advantages in this respect, appeared doubled on this occasion; the lover would not easily have been brought to suppose, at this time, that an archangel was quite so handsome, quite so wise, or quite so full of sweetness. He determined on visiting her the next day, and devoted a new suit of embroidery to aid him in his attack, by making it's first appearance before her.

To say, whether it were Mr. Edwards's good or evil genius that constantly prevented him from putting in execution his designs upon this lady, will require some farther period of time, than can be comprized within the bounds of this history, to determine; indeed, some time that is not yet elapsed must run it's course first, for I determine against all judgments of the events of marriages made during the first six weeks: so it was, however, that, with all this admiration in his head, and all this love in his heart, he never saw her after the first meeting.

If thou supposest this the contrivance of the author, O reader! rather than of fate, thou wilt be apt to say, he was reduced to a very shabby-one, when thou hearest that the incident which put the final period to all this determined courtship, took it's origin from no greater a beginning, than his receiving this very evening a note from his uncle Jeremy, to tell him that he had some particular business, and wished to see him the next morning.

Mr. Edwards was polite enough not to go to bed before three o'clock, and consequently not to rise before noon: it was one o'clock before he arrived at his uncle's apartment, where he found the business was, that the old gentleman had heard from his father, and was about to send him over his accounts. He added—'I cannot suppose, nephew, that you are in want of money at this time; but, as I can't properly answer any draft of yours after these accounts are sent over, till I have your father's answer about them, here is an odd sum of thirteen hundred pounds more, which you may as well take at present, and I will add it with the usual conditions to the bill.'

The young fellow's heart leaped at the name of the money. He little imagined what were his uncle's motives in offering it; he accepted it with the warm-

est returns of gratitude, and promised to be as prudent as if he had not seen a sixpence of it. The old fellow, who had now lent all the money he could raise on so good security, and at so good interest, knew he had made all the market he was to expect of the family. He sent over his accounts by the next ship, and very easily reconciled himself to the light he must appear in to the father, from the consideration of the advantage he had made of him. The unlimited bill of credit he had given, the old fellow knew, was sufficient to bear him out in law; and he was only unhappy, that he had not been able to command more ready money, of which he might have made the same noble and honest advantage.

CHAP. X.

MR. EDWARDS FALLS IN THE WAY OF A NEW ADVENTURE.

WHILE uncle Jeremy's thoughts were all rapture on the success of his schemes upon the distant father, his nephew's were not less elate with the prospect of his amour, and with the sum he had so unexpectedly become possessed of. His chariot was at the outer gate of Scotland Yard, and he was tripping to it with great alacrity, to get home and prepare for the enchanting scene of the afternoon, when he was stopped by the execution of a most masterly hand, on a fine-toned harpsichord, accompanied by a voice which was easily distinguished to be a female one, and whose sweetness made every other sound disagreeable.

Our hero had taste enough for musick to be struck with this performance, and judgment enough to admire it: he turned his eye toward the place whence it came, and through the opening that a half-drawn up blue silk curtain gave into an elegant parlour, he discovered the person to whom he owed his entertainment.

It happened that Mrs. Conquest, for the lady was no other than that accomplished fair one, had turned her head toward the window, at the very instant when his eyes were directed to it. If thou hast seen Mrs. Conquest, gentle reader, we need not tell thee what were the sensations in a young fellow's heart, who

who had, before she looked toward him, been in a very good humour to admire her; if thou hast that pleasure to come, it is worth purchasing at the expence of an empire. The state of Mr. Edwards's heart, at this moment, we can no more describe than himself could, if he had been then called upon to do it. The lady blushed on seeing she was observed; and the lover, for so from this instant we are to call him, retired slowly to Will's coffee-house.

He was not lucky enough to find any body he knew there; but his impatience was too great to let him think of punctilios. He sat down at a table where there were four young sea-officers, and asked them, not without great emotion, if they could possibly inform him who it was that lived over the way? A smile appeared upon every one of their faces in an instant; and the short sentences, 'Do you tell him; no, do you tell him,' were bandied about from one to another of them, around and across the table, with great alacrity, attended by many speaking looks and shrugs for several minutes.

Our hero told them, he was very happy to find every one of them was able to give him the information he had taken the liberty to ask; but he begged, in consideration of his own impatience and uneasiness, they would settle it at once who should do him the friendly office. The burst of a short laugh from every quarter accompanied the word *impatience*; and, in regard to the other term, something was whispered about his not being kept in such a state very long, that was very far from being displeasing to him.

He pressed his suit; but at length the eldest of the company, as the laugh declined among them, looked grave, and said—'No, d—n it, 'tis pity; don't say any thing about her.' He got up as he spoke; the others followed his example; and our hero, when he thought himself on the brink of hearing a history that he found himself greatly interested in, had the mortification to see he was left alone, with nothing to comfort him, but what little ease he had received from the peculiar emphasis with which one of the company had pronounced after him the word *uneasy*.

CHAP. XI.

MR. EDWARDS MAKES VIOLENT LOVE TO THE CELEBRATED MRS. CONQUEST.

MISS Sedate had long proved a good standing dish with our hero, that he thought he could have recourse to on any emergency; but it was her fate still to be set by for every new kickshaw. As she had been before disregarded for the sake of Miss Oddly, she was now destined to the same fate on account of Mrs. Conquest. There was something in the face of that lady that our hero found irresistible. He threw himself into his chariot, and drove home to concert the manner in which he should make his approaches.

The whole world cannot shew a greater instance of what dreadful consequences perfect inadvertence and a too careless gaiety of spirit in a woman may be attended with, than in Mrs. Conquest; whose virtue, though as free from stain or blemish as her face, yet has not been able to preserve her character from being hacked and mangled, as we have just seen, even in publick, by a number of butcherly ruffians.

It was the fortune of this amiable creature to be married early to an old husband. A publick employment that gentleman was vested with, naturally and necessarily drew a multitude of gay people about him: a young woman, with less beauty and fewer accomplishments than Mrs. Conquest was possessed of, under the circumstance of being so married, and so visited, could not have failed of many addresses. She received them all alike, diverted herself with bantering and laughing at them, much as we have just seen Miss Oddly serve our hero, and constantly entertained her husband with the progress every one had made: it is as certain, that not one of the friends of this gentleman ever did him the injury that almost every friend is ready to do almost every husband whose wife is handsome, as that every one of them desired it. The natural consequence of a repulse of this kind, given to a rascal, is his boasting that he has succeeded. There were not wanting some people of this stamp among

among the number of Mrs. Conquest's admirers; and, as her unrestrained behaviour to every one of them had given too much appearance for suspicion, there was not one of them who told a falsity of this kind, but was believed. The men very readily gave into this, as it flattered their own expectations in regard to her; and the women were glad to propagate it, as it took from the character of one whose person and qualifications rendered her the rival of the whole sex.

We are all naturally the last people in the world who hear any ill of ourselves; and, when we do hear it with a consciousness of not having deserved it, we are apt to treat it with a contempt that is very well reconcileable to justice, though by no means to prudence. Mrs. Conquest had no idea that the world in general had taken up so unjust an opinion of her, and had always treated what hints she had received of it, whether from friends or enemies, with an insolent disregard, which, though it very well squared with her own just sentiments on the subject, yet, under the unhappy mistake the world was in, it gave those who thought unfairly of her an idea of a character that was not above suspicion, but hardened against accusation.

Such was the situation of Mrs. Conquest after the death of her husband, when the hero of our story added one to the number of her admirers. He was thoroughly in love with what he had seen of her, and little imagined, that the face he had been so charmed with at a distance, would appear infinitely handsomer on a nearer examination; much less that, with all its merit set in the best light, it was the last thing that a man of discernment would find out to admire in her who possessed it. The ill success of his dangling scheme with Miss Oddly determined him on the bringing matters to a more speedy issue in this adventure: the character he had conceived of the lady, from what he learned at Will's, gave him all the encouragement he could desire to proceed upon a bold plan; and he determined that very night as the period of his siege. He ordered the embroidered suit, that was to have introduced him to the good graces of Miss Sedate, to be brought out; gave directions to his valet to be more than ordinarily careful in dressing his hair; and,

before he sat down to the operation, he dispatched the following card to the lady—

'MADAM,
'AN accident shewed me this morning that, till then, I had not seen the finest woman in the world: you won't blame, or wonder at my being desirous of repeating that pleasure. I beg you will do me the honour of suffering me to wait on you this afternoon, which I shall eternally remember, as an infinite obligation laid on, Madam, your very obedient and devoted servant,

'G. EDWARDS.'

The answer brought back was verbal, and was, that the lady did not recollect that she knew any body of the name of Edwards; but that, whoever the person was, she desired to see him.

It is very possible the lover might not understand by this message, exactly what the lady meant who sent it: it appeared to him in no other light, than that she was willing to receive the addresses of a stranger, be he who he would. Whether Mrs. Conquest had intended exactly that by it, the reader may possibly discover in the following chapter.

CHAP. XII.

IN WHICH MR. EDWARDS AND MRS. CONQUEST PART MUCH BETTER FRIENDS THAN THEY MET.

THE hour of visiting arrived; the beau was equipped for victory; the coachman drove up to the door with a peculiar flourish; the footman made the whole yard re-echo with the larum he sounded at it; and the hero was received by a servant out of livery at the door, and conducted to the parlour.

The lady was reading, or pretending to read, when he entered: she drew herself up to two inches more than her ordinary height, as she received him; and, without laying down her book, told him, it was impossible for her to guess how she came to be honoured with that visit. Short and simple as the purport of this sentence was, there was something in the lady's manner, as she delivered it, that perfectly convinced our adventurer he had made a very unhappy blunder,

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and been guilty of an unpardonable crime in consequence of it. There was something of a dignity without affectation, a commanding superiority, without the least tincture of insolence, in the lady's deportment, that struck and confounded him too much to give him leave even to reply.

He was standing in a perplexed silence, and making as foolish a figure as ever a fine gentleman did under a disappointment; when the lady, pointing to a chair, told him—'I don't know, Sir, that the want of a proper respect in you can justify me in an omission of the same kind; I beg you will sit down: and, Sir,' continued she, 'not that I can resent a thing of this kind, from a person who is an entire stranger to me; but, for my own satisfaction, I beg you to inform me what can have led you to so strange a step as this.'

The great composure with which Mrs. Conquest spoke this, had some effect upon the ruffled thoughts of our hero; he began to come to himself a little, and, after a short pause, told her, that he should not attempt to make any apology, because there was no submission that could be adequate to the offence; but that he thought it justice to herself, as well as to the persons who led him into his error, to acknowledge that the fault was entirely his own; that the origin of it was mere unlucky accident; that he had enquired after her, on his accidentally seeing her in the morning; and that, having been but ill qualified to describe her on so slight a view, he had done her so little justice in the attempt, that the gentlemen he had applied to for information had indisputably understood him of some other woman, and had given him an account of that person, which had authorized his writing the note which by great mistake he had sent to her.

The lady, with the same composure of countenance—for she is, of all women in the world, most mistress of herself—asked him, as a farther act of friendship, to tell her of whom he had that information. Mr. Edwards thought the least reparation he could attempt making the lady, for such an injury as he had done her, was telling her the truth; he confessed that he received it from some strangers, of whom he had made his enquiry at the coffee-house just by.

Mrs. Conquest could not refrain from telling him, with a blush, that it was not well-done to enquire after a woman of any degree of reputation in so unguarded a manner; but, recovering herself from this little confusion, she proceeded to ask him, with the same coolness with which she had proposed the preceding questions, whether the persons from whom he had received this information appeared to be of the navy; Mr. Edwards answered, that he believed they were.

All the resolution of Mrs. Conquest could not support her against the shock she felt at this reply; the woman overcame the heroine in her disposition, and honest tears proclaimed her innocence more than all the asseverations in the world could have done. She suppressed them after a few moments; and, recovering her calmness again, delivered her sense of the incident in the following words. 'I am convinced, Sir, of a thing I have often had reason to suspect, but would never permit myself to believe before. There was a confused perplexity in your first apology, that shewed me you did not perfectly believe yourself in what you told me. You have made no mistake: I am not ashamed to tell you I am the person these people meant by their account to you; for shame is the proper attendant on guilt, not on the accusation of it. I shall convince you, Sir, that the character you are pleased to entertain of me, does not belong to me; but, in justice to myself, I ought also to tell you, that I have been unhappy enough to be the object of very unwarrantable pursuits in many of the people of that rank, and am afraid my not having listened to any of them has laid me under an aspersion that nothing but my having acted a contrary part could have justified.'

Mr. Edwards arose slowly and trembling from his chair; and walking up to the lady, with the utmost modesty and reserve in his deportment, took hold of her hand. 'I don't know how to express, Madam,' says he, 'the astonishment and confusion you have filled me with: I never can forgive myself the insult I have offered you, nor think of any reparation, but the convincing the persons who misinformed me in this shameful manner, that they did so. But this is trifling. You

CHAP. XIII.

THE FRIEND OF OUR HERO IS ENGAGED IN A VERY IMPORTANT NEGOTIATION.

‘see before you, Madam, an honest, innocent; undefining fellow, with a fortune equal to almost any woman’s expectations: give me leave to convince you how perfectly satisfied I am of my first mistake, by offering myself and that fortune to you upon your own conditions. I am sensible I can’t be worthy of you; I am sensible nothing can be worthy of you; but I am more sensible that I have seen too much to be able to support the loss of you.’

The lady, who had not, during this whole speech, recovered herself from the confusion her own declaration had involved her in, as soon as she had recollected herself, replied—‘I am not to deny to you, that I have heard much of this romantick way of talk before. I have no reason to imagine you serious; nor, if I did, is there any thing I could answer to it. We are strangers, and I beg we may continue so. I cannot but acknowledge, your visit has been the cause of more uneasiness to me than I have ever felt before, or shall be ever capable of feeling again; but you have been the innocent cause of it, and I forgive you freely. I think the business of this strange visit is at an end; and I beg you will not think it intentional rudeness, that I request you to put an end to it; for, upon my word, I am ill, and must be excused from having company any longer.’

Mr. Edwards, who was perfectly in earnest in his last declaration, was in no humour to part upon these conditions; he pressed his having leave to wait on her again very importunately, but was refused: the lady at length was reduced to say—‘Indeed, you oblige me to tell you this is not using me well; I cannot, will not, stay any longer with you, nor is there any appearance of reason why I should think of seeing you again.’ Even this, home as it was, could not send off our lover on so bad terms; he continued, with infinite submissions and apologies, to entreat she would permit him to see her, if it were but once more; and, in fine, extorted from her a promise, that on condition some person whom she ought to believe would tell her he was a proper person for a woman of character to be visited by, she would consent to his coming some other afternoon.

MRS. Conquest could not well suppose that the conditions she had exacted could be very hard ones upon a person of her new lover’s appearance and deportment; but so it was, that if she had commanded him to bring certificates from another world of his qualifications, the difficulty could not have appeared to him, at first sight, much greater.

Mr. Edwards was, indeed, in a situation that many a man of figure in this town is in, though he very little suspects it of himself; he was known to no creature that was worth knowing. It was hardly more than a month that he had been in Europe; in that time he had made but very few acquaintances, and those were not only among people who in reality knew nothing of him, but whom he had very good reason to be ashamed of.

It sometimes came into his head to send his uncle, who could assure the lady of the true state of his affairs; but his figure and appearance, he dreaded, would have a very bad effect on such a commission. While he was in the midst of this perplexity, revolving every thing, but what was of most importance, in his mind, Mr. Spence, who had a right to much more of his attention than the hurry of his late pursuits had given him an opportunity of paying him, came in on a visit.

The youth no sooner saw him, than he flew into his arms. ‘Dearest, dearest friend!’ says he, ‘I condemn myself of ingratitude and baseness, while I tell you, that you have never entered into my thoughts, though you are the only man in the world who can do me a service, that my whole life, spent in gratitude and acknowledgments, can never repay you.’ He proceeded to tell him the nature of his situation, and the necessity of some man of worth and honour appearing to his character.

His friend very readily undertook the office, but told him there was a difficulty he did not seem to see in the way; which

was, that he was as utterly unknown as himself to the lady, and indeed to the world, and consequently his testimony could be of very little weight in his favour. 'Go, my dear friend,' replied the youth; 'go, and be charmed as much as I am. You will find a woman who does not take up her rules of judging from the customs or opinions of the world. She has judgment enough to distinguish merit and honour wherever it is placed, and will not be a moment at a loss to know what dependance she is to place on your testimony. Go, and may success attend you! for to me there is but one road to happiness in the world, and she alone can guide to it.'

The next morning was fixed on for the visit of the friend; and the necessary preparations were made for it, by a card from that gentleman, to inform her that Mr. Spence would do himself the honour of waiting on her, to inform her of the family and affairs of the gentleman whom she had seen the day before. The prudence and caution of Mr. Spence would have objected to the terms *Family, and Affairs*, as hinting at something too particular in the nature of his embassy: but Mr. Edwards was much in earnest; he knew this would be putting the whole affair in a very forward situation; he knew that this was the very business upon which he had at length obtained her permission to send a friend to her; he was heartily determined not to lose so much ground; and he depended on her good understanding for her not excepting against a freedom which, however far he carried it, she would remember she had given him a right to.

Notwithstanding these reasons, which were all very good ones, for the adding these two words to the note, our hero's noble courage was hardly enough to support him during the interval of the sending and receiving an answer to it: the moment the messenger produced the card, he tore it open; and had no sooner read in it, that the lady would be glad to see Mr. Spence at one, than he concluded he had succeeded to his utmost expectations, and congratulated himself very heartily on so amazing, so unexpected a happiness, as he now assured himself he was upon the point of possessing.

Mr. Spence, who knew the precipitate temper of his young friend, though he had determined, however much against his inclinations, to execute his commission with the utmost punctuality, yet thought it proper, before he gave the character of his friend, to enquire into that of the person to whom he was to give it. He succeeded in this no better than the lover himself had done: but he determined not to shock his ears with a repetition of what he had been told, till he had found, by the behaviour of the lady herself, how much truth there was in it. He was punctual to the appointment; and, if the reader's curiosity should prompt him to enquire what passed at this interview, he will find it recorded in the following chapter.

CHAP. XIV.

A MEETING BETWEEN TWO VERY ACCOMPLISHED PEOPLE.

THOUGH Mr. Spence had gone to Mrs. Conquest with no better an opinion of her than the lover had carried with him on his visit, he was almost as immediately convinced of the wrong he had done her in harbouring it, as his friend had been. He did not think it was his business to give the least hint of suspicions, which he assured himself, from her manner and deportment, were absolutely groundless, but was impatient to enter on the business of his embassy. The lady interrupted him with an apology for her own conduct in seeing him on such an errand, and continued to tell him—'The gentleman, Sir, in whose favour you come, is an entire stranger to me: I have seen him only once, and the circumstances under which we then met, were such as might have prejudiced me much more against him than my receiving this visit from you will make it appear that I am. I would not condemn a person for being misled into a fault, as I would one who was intentionally guilty of it; but though I have forgot the offence, I am to do myself the justice of assuring you, this meeting with you has been the effect of his too earnestly requesting it, not of any inclination I can have to talk farther upon so romantick a subject.'

'subject as you do me the honour to engage yourself about.'

'If it were possible, Madam,' replied Mr. Spence, 'for you to know the circumstances under which I plead for this gentleman's having permission to wait upon you, you would pay a more than usual attention to it. I acknowledge to you, Madam,' continued he, 'that I scarce know any thing that could make me so unhappy, as his succeeding in his addresses to you: but he knows nothing of this, he confides in me as an honest man, and employs me as a friend. My own partial views shall give place to his happiness; and I will act up to the confidence he has reposed in me, by assuring you that he is a youth of uncommon qualifications of mind, free from every taint of vice, and has a heart full of every virtue: his fortune is such as few women could except against; and I am very sensible, Madam,' concluded he, 'of your deserts when I speak it; but I must add, that I think him every way worthy even of you, and believe, from my soul, that he will be the author of as much happiness to you, as you to him.'

Mrs. Conquest was charmed with the disinterested, plain sincerity, of the person who spoke to her:

- 'There is a noble freedom
- 'Dwells with the great, unknown to fawning sycophants,
- 'That claims the privilege of being believ'd.'

She did not question the sincerity of the least accent he had uttered, and began to think of the young fellow in a much more favourable light than she had hitherto done. There was something, however, in the beginning of Mr. Spence's declaration in favour of her friend, that touched her, she knew not why, very nearly: 'You tell me, Sir,' says she, 'that yourself are nearly interested in the event of what you have undertaken to plead for; and, if I understand you right, you are to be unhappy if your friend succeeds. I cannot but esteem a person who could plead so warmly as you have done for a cause that he could only be made happy by losing; and there appears no reason to me why I should sacrifice the peace of a person I esteem to the request of one concern-

ing whom my heart or my thoughts are not at all interested. You must pardon me, Sir, if I make it a condition of my seeing this gentleman again, that I hear first from you, with all that sincerity with which you have hitherto spoken, what it is that so immediately concerns you in the success of this attempt.'

The visitor pleaded very earnestly the impossibility of his explaining himself to her on that head: he told her it would not be honest; that it were betraying his trust in the basest manner, even for interested views, and being the enemy of the man who claimed and merited his friendship, and to whom he had engaged himself as a friend. He begged her to pardon and excuse him; and not to remember, that in his warmth for the cause, in his eagerness to be believed, he had dropped, through inadvertency, a word that seemed to make against it.

Mrs. Conquest replied—'Still, Sir, I see you are the same worthy and disinterested man. I applaud, and shall always esteem, you for it: but you will pardon me, that I find myself now concerned in the circumstance; and that I tell you, as I at present can have no pain in refusing to receive your friend's visits, I will not give you any by receiving them, nor engage my thoughts any farther on a subject in which I see perplexities and intricacies that will but ill bear unravelling.'

The lady persisted in her resolution; and the utmost that the visitor could prevail with her to grant was, that himself, not his friend, should see her again in the afternoon.

CHAP. XV.

A LADY IS INTRODUCED TO MRS. CONQUEST'S ACQUAINTANCE.

WHEN the reader shall have gone through this short chapter, he will find that it is hardly possible to conceive a more nice or difficult part than Mr. Spence had to act on this occasion. He returned to his friend, and resolutely refused to give him any farther account of the success of his visit, than that he was to repeat it in four or five hours. The visible anxiety and uneasiness in the face of this gentleman during the period of

of his short stay, for he could by no means be prevailed with to remain longer than just to give this account of his expedition, gave our hero but a very bad presage of his success: he took his leave of him at the door, full of new thoughts of Miss Sedate; and could not refrain from telling him, he believed it was hardly worth his while to go to the other again.

The hour of visiting approached; Mrs. Conquest was as impatient for an explanation as the reader may possibly be by this time: a rap at the door proclaimed the arrival of company; and a minute after appeared Mr. Spence, and in his hand a beautiful young creature, whose unaffected modesty struck the lady, at first sight, in a very favourable manner.

The servants were no sooner dismissed, than Mr. Spence began—‘ You insisted, Madam, on my explaining an unlucky slip of my tongue this morning. You will say I am a villain when I have complied; but I can sooner bear that sentence, than totally ruin my friend’s cause, by refusing to do it. I am to begin by telling you I am myself all a cheat; but it is from honest, honourable motives. My name is not Spence, but Wentworth. This lady is my niece: he who is now your lover, perhaps once was hers. Imagine not that either she or I have any thing to accuse him of: we only can guess that he honoured her with his esteem; the match would have been unequal, and he obeyed his father in leaving her and his native country to make this voyage to England. That no thoughts of his unlucky passion for her might give him disquiet, or prevent his pursuing every step his father had planned out for him, I, at her request, informed him she was dead. I love and honour him for his whole behaviour in this difficult scene; and have attended him to England, unknown even to himself as any way concerned in this lady’s cause, only determined to do every thing to serve him. I had not been here ten days, before another ship arrived, in which the unhappy girl was a passenger: she has been with me ever since; but she has never even wished to see him, as it would have laid an imputation on me of having poorly contrived a scene for his destruction. I think she would

rather see him more happy with another, than less so with herself. I have brought her, to assure you, Madam, that she has no right, no pretensions, to a thought of him; and, when you have been informed of that, to tell you, that the misery it must be to me to see so worthy a creature unhappy, was the motive I felt for wishing this deserving, this amiable, young man, might not succeed in his addresses to you, even while I was urging every circumstance possible in his favour.’

Miss Wentworth was silent during this whole relation; but tears, more eloquent than words, pleaded her cause so powerfully in the breast of Mrs. Conquest, that when, at length, she summoned strength enough to say—‘ Indeed, Madam, I am neither deserving of him, nor have any right to the least favourable thought from him;’ that lady answered—‘ That I will never rob you of him, is most certain. I can have no partiality for a man I have barely seen; and if I had, I should be base not to sacrifice it to so infinitely better founded and more rational a claim. I almost envy him the happiness he must have in calling you his wife, and that gentleman his relation: but I beg of you both, that I may have some share in the bringing it about. Mr. Wentworth,’ continued she, ‘ send instantly to tell your friend I shall be glad to see him; and leave this lady with me, to receive him. Be not under any apprehensions that I can change my resolution: I should even despise him for not giving me up to such a passion, if he could be wretched enough to hesitate about it.’

The lady was peremptory in her commands; the niece more than consented to the proposal, and the uncle went himself to send the lover. A thousand times, in his way thither, he had a mind to disclose the whole to him; but this would have been betraying the confidence Mrs. Conquest had reposed in him; not to mention another consideration, that, in spite of all his hardy virtue, would have its weight with him: he at length resolved to deliver his message punctually, and without addition; and the lover, who little expected so favourable a one, much less imagined the real purport of it, set off for Scotland Yard on the instant, in very visible raptures.





CHAP. XVI.

OUR HERO'S FATE DETERMINED IN
A MANNER VERY UNEXPECTED
TO HIMSELF.

MRS. Conquest had placed both Miss Wentworth and herself full in the lover's view as he came into the room. He started a moment as he entered the door, but he made only one step from it to the place where his first love sat: he sunk tenderly upon her neck, and was imprinting a thousand kisses, and saying ten thousand tender things to her, without perceiving that she was a motionless statue in his arms. Mrs. Conquest, who had supposed such an event natural enough to be expected, was better prepared for it; and while the lover was raving out—'Was it only my fond imagination that thou wert restored to life? Art thou dead, as I have all this time thought thee?' Her servants made so good use of cold water, the hartshorn bottle, and the other family remedies usual on these occasions, that the brightest eyes in the world opened again, and gave, while they received it, a happiness that, as scarce any body has been the object of such a surprise, scarce any body can form an adequate idea of.

A fresh profusion of tenderness now found its way from our lover; and he had exhausted every source of transport,

before he was at leisure to remember in whose house he was, and under what circumstances. He was going to look grave; but Mrs. Conquest saved him the trouble of an apology, by telling what she should have thought of him if he had not given occasion for one; and concluded with saying—'Sir, I have no right or title to give up in you to this lady; but, if I had, I would resign it.'

Little ceremony was necessary between two people who by this time knew one another's minds so well as our new-met lovers. Mr. Wentworth and Mrs. Conquest had the pleasure of seeing the ceremony performed in two or three days. When the new-married people had revelled a month, in perfect happiness, in town, it was judged proper to think of returning to their native country. The young gentleman arrived there two days after the death of his father: he found himself in possession of a very ample fortune, though not quite so magnificent as one as had been represented; and he was no sooner convinced of the villainy of his uncle, in the use he had made of his necessities, than he came to a resolution of repaying him the borrowed money, with lawful interest only. This the old gentleman was obliged to accept; and, after heartily cursing his whole family, and all the relations in the world, he left it at his death, which happened about eight months afterwards, to the faithful Ruth.

F I N I S.

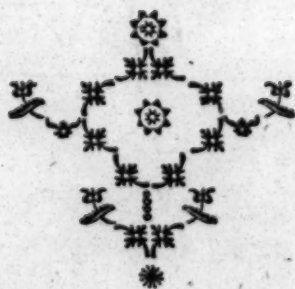


THE
INVISIBLE SPY.

BY EXPLORABILIS.

Explorabilis, friend.

N TWO VOLUMES.

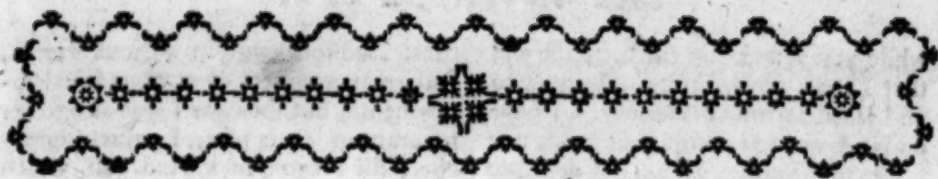


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THE
INVISIBLE SPY.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTION.

TO THE PUBLICK.



Have observed that when a new book begins to make a noise in the world, every one is desirous of becoming acquainted with the author; and this impatience increases, the more he endeavours to conceal himself. I expect to hear an hundred different names inscribed to the Invisible, some of which I should, perhaps, be proud of, others as much ashamed to own. Some will doubtless take me for a philosopher, others for a fool; with some I shall pass for a man of pleasure, with others for a stoick; some will look upon me as a courtier, others as a patriot: but whether I am any one of these, or whether I am even a man or a woman, they will find it, after all their conjectures, as difficult to discover as the longitude.

I think it therefore a duty incumbent on my good-nature to put an early stop to such fruitless inquiries; and also at the same time to satisfy, in some measure, the curiosity of the publick, by giving an account of the means by which I attained the gift of invisibility I possess.

Know then, gentle reader, that in the former part of my life it was my good fortune to do a signal service to a cer-

tain venerable person since dead: he was descended from the ancient Magi of the Chaldeans, inherited their wisdom, and was well versed in all the mystick secrets of their art. Besides his gratitude for the good offices I had done him, he seemed to have found something in my humour and manner of behaviour that extremely pleased him; he would often have me with him, and entertained me with discourses on things of which otherwise I should have had no idea.

But it was not long that I enjoyed this benefit. He sent for me one day, to let me know he was much indisposed, and desired I would come immediately to him: I went, and found him, not as I expected, in bed, but sitting in an easy chair. After the first salutations were over, and I had placed myself pretty near him—'My good friend,' said he, taking hold of my hand, 'I feel that I must shortly quit this busy world; the silver cord is loosened, the golden bowl is broken, every thing within me hastens to a speedy dissolution; and I was willing to see you once more before I set out on my journey to that land of shades; as Hamlet truly says—

"That undiscover'd country, from whose
"bourn
"No traveller returns."

'As the remembrance of you,' continued he, 'will certainly accompany me beyond the grave, I would wish, methinks, to hold some place in yours

A 2 'while

‘while you remain on earth, to the end that I may not be quite a stranger to you when we meet in eternity. I have no land, nor tenements, nor gold, nor silver, to bequeath, yet am not destitute of something which may be equally worthy your acceptance.’

Then, after a little pause—‘Take this,’ added he, giving me a key; ‘it will admit you into a closet which no one but myself has ever entered. I call it my cabinet of curiosities, and I believe you will find such things there as will deserve that name: chuse from among them any one that most suits your fancy, and accept it as a token of my love.’

He said no more, but rung his bell for a servant, who, by his orders, conducted me by a narrow winding stair-case to the top of the house, and left me at a little door, which I opened with the key that had been given me, and found myself in a small square room, built after the manner of a turret. All the furniture was an old wicker chair, with a piece of blanket thrown carelessly over it, I suppose to defend the sage from the air when he sat there to study; near it was placed a table, not less antiquated, with two globes, a standish with some paper, and several books in manuscript, but wrote in characters too unintelligible for me to comprehend any part of what they contained. Just in the middle of the ceiling hung a pretty large chrystal ball, filled with a shining yellowish powder, and this inscription pasted on it—

THE ILLUSIVE POWDER.

A small quantity of this powder, blown through the quill of a porcupine when the Moon is in Aries, raises splendid visions in the people’s eyes; and, if applied when the same planet is in Cancer, spreads universal terror and dismay.

I easily perceived that this was one of the curiosities my friend had mentioned, and a great one indeed it was; but, as I had neither interest nor inclination to impose upon my fellow-creatures, I judged it fitter for the possession of some one or other of the mighty rulers of the earth.

I then turned towards the walls, which were all hung round with telescopes, horoscopes, microscopes, talismans, multipliers, magnifiers of all degrees and

sizes, loadstones cut in various forms, and great numbers of mathematical instruments; but these, as I was altogether ignorant of their uses, I passed slightly over, till I came to a hand-bell, which having the appearance of no other than such as I had ordinarily seen at a lady’s tea-table, I should have taken no notice of, but for a label prefixed to it, on which I found these words—

THE SYMPATHETICK BELL,

The least tinkle of which not only sets all the bells of the whole country, be it of ever so large extent, in motion, without the help of men to pluck the ropes, but also makes them play whatever changes the party is pleased to nominate.

Though I thought art could produce no greater wonder than this bell, yet I felt no strong desire of becoming master of it; but proceeded to examine what farther rarities this extraordinary cabinet would present. The next I took notice of was a phial, not much unlike those which are commonly sold in the shops with French Hungary-water: it had this inscription—

SALTS OF MEDITATION,

Which, held close to the nostrils for the space of three seconds and a half, corrects all vague and wandering thoughts, fixes the mind, and enables it to ponder justly on any subject that requires deliberation.

This beneficial secret I also rejected, through a mere point of conscience, as thinking it would be a much better service to mankind if in the possession of the divines, lawyers, politicians, or physicians; especially the two last mentioned, as it might prevent the one from engaging in any enterprize they have not abilities or courage to go through with; and the other from falling into those gross mistakes they are frequently guilty of in relation to the case of the diseased.

The next, and indeed the first thing that raised in me any covetous emotions, was the apparatus of a belt, but seemed no more than a collection of atoms gathered together in that form, and playing in the sun-beams. I could not persuade myself it was a real substance, till

I took

I took it down, and then found it so light, that if I shut my eyes I knew not that I had any thing in my hand. The label annexed to it had these words—

THE BELT OF INVISIBILITY,

Which, fastened round the body, next the skin, no sooner becomes warm, than it renders the party invisible to all human eyes.

A little farther, on the same side of the wall, was placed a tablet, or pocket-book; which, on examining, I found was composed of a clear glassy substance, firm, yet thin as the bubbles which we sometimes see rise on the surface of the waters: it was malleable, and doubled in many foldings, so that, when shut, it seemed very small; but, when extended, was more long and broad than any sheet I ever saw of imperial paper. Its uses were decyphered in the following inscription—

THE WONDERFUL TABLET,

Which, in whatever place it is spread open, receives the impression of every word that is spoken, in as distinct a manner as if engraved; and can no way be expunged but by the breath of a virgin, of so pure an innocence as not to have even thought on the difference of sexes. After such a one, if such a one is to be found, has blown pretty hard upon it for the space of seven seconds and three quarters, she must wipe it gently with the first down under the left wing of an unfledged swan, plucked when the Moon is in three degrees of Virgo: this done, the Tablet will be entirely free from all former memorandums, and fit to take a new impression.

Note, That the virgin must exceed twelve years of age.

I was very much divided between these two: the Belt of Invisibilty put a thousand rambles into my head, which promised discoveries highly flattering to the inquisitiveness of my humour; but then the Tablet, recording every thing I should hear spoken, which I confess my memory is too defective to retain, filled me with the most ardent desire of becoming master of so inestimable a treasure. In fine, I wanted both; so encroaching is

the temper of mankind, that the grant of one favour generally paves the way for soliciting a second.

While I was in this dilemma, a stratagem occurred, which I hesitated not to put in practice, and found it answer to my wishes. I took both the Belt and Tablet in my hand; and having carefully locked the door of the cabinet, returned to the adept: he saw the Belt, which being long, hung over my wrist; but not perceiving I had the Tablet—
‘The choice you have made,’ said he with a smile, ‘confirms the truth of what I always believed, that curiosity is the most prevailing passion of the human mind.’

‘However just that position may be,’ replied I, ‘that propensity is not strong enough in me, to make me able to decide between the wonderful Tablet, and the no less wonderful Belt: they appear to me of such equal estimation, that whenever I would fix on the one, the benefits of the other rise up in opposition to my choice; and I know not which of the two I should receive with most pleasure, or leave with the least regret. I have therefore brought both down to you, and intreat you will determine for me.’

I soon perceived he understood my meaning perfectly well; for, after a little pause—
‘When I made you the offer,’ said he, ‘of whatever you liked best among my collection of curiosities, I intended not that your acceptance of one thing should render you unhappy through the want of another: take, then, I beseech you, both the Belt and the Tablet; you shall leave neither of them behind you; nor do I wonder you should desire to unite them; they are, in a manner, concomitant; and the satisfaction that either of them would be able to procure, would be incomplete without the assistance of the other.’

Thus was I put in possession of a treasure, which I thought the more valuable, as I was pretty certain no other person, in this kingdom at least, enjoyed the like. After making proper acknowledgments to the obliging donor, I took my leave, and returned home with a heart overflowing with delight.

I was not long before I made trial of my Belt, and found the effects as the label had described. I also opened my Tablet, spoke, and saw my words immediately

mediately imprinted on it. I then procured some swans-down, according to direction, and entreated several young ladies to breathe upon it, one after another: but though I dare answer for their virtue, the favour they did me was in vain; the impression remained still indelible.

Indeed, when I began to consider maturely on the conditions prescribed in the label of the Tablet, I was sensible that it was not enough for a virgin to be perfectly innocent; she must also be equally ignorant, to be qualified for the performance of the task required: and not to have once thought on the difference of sexes, seemed a thing scarce possible, after six or seven years of age at most; and would have been as great a prodigy as either of those which had been bestowed upon me by the adept.

What would I not have given for such a one as Dorinda in Shakespeare's *Inchanted Island*! but such a hope being vain, I was extremely puzzled, and knew not what to do. At last, however, a lucky thought got me over the difficulty; it was this: I prevailed, for a small sum of money, with a very poor widow, who had several children, to let me have a girl of about three years old, to bring up and educate as I judged proper. I then committed my little purchase to the care of an elderly woman, whose discretion I had experienced. I communicated to her the whole of my design, and instructed her how to proceed in order to render it effectual.

The little creature was kept in an upper room, which had no window in it but a sky-light in the roof of the house; so could be witness of nothing that passed below. Her diet was thin, and very sparing. She was not permitted to sleep above half the time generally allowed for repose; and so no living thing but the old woman, who lay with her, gave her food, and did all that was necessary about her.

I frequently visited them in my invisibility, and was highly pleased and diverted with the diligence of my good old woman. She not only obeyed my orders with the utmost punctuality, but did many things of her own accord, which, though very requisite, I had not thought of. To prevent her young charge from falling into any of those distempers which the want of exercise

sometimes occasions, she contrived to make a swing for her across the room; taught her to play at battledore and shuttlecock; to toss the ball, and catch it at the rebound; and such like childish gambols, which both delighted her mind, and kept her limbs in a continual motion.

This conduct, and this regimen, constantly observed, maintained my virgin's purity inviolate; as I did not fail to make an essay in a few days after she entered into her thirteenth year, and the success of my endeavours made me not regret the pains I had been at for such a length of time.

Now it runs in my head that some people will not credit one word of all this; for as there are many who believe too much, there are yet many more who will believe nothing at all but what their own shallow reason enables them to comprehend. Well, then, let them judge as they think fit; let them puzzle their wise noddles till they ache; I shall sit snug in my invisibility, while they lose half the pleasure, and, it may be, all the improvement, of my lubrications.

But those who resolve to pursue me through the following pages with an ingenuous candour, I flatter myself will lose nothing by the chase. They will find me in various places, though not in so many as perhaps they may expect. They would in vain seek me at court balls, city feasts, the halls of justice, or meetings for elections; nor do I much haunt the opera or play-houses. In fine, I avoid all crowds, all mixed assemblies, except the masquerade and Venetian balls. I am a member of the established church; but, as I am not ashamed of appearing at divine worship, never put on my Invisible Belt when I go there. I revere regal authority, but seldom visit the cabinets of princes; because they are generally so filled with a thick fog, that the chryselline texture of my Tablets could not receive what was said there so as to be read distinctly: nor do I much care to venture myself among their ministers of state, or any of their under-working tools; the floors of their rooms, in which their cabals are held, are composed of such slippery materials, that the least *faux pas* might endanger my invisibility, if not my neck. I should be more frequently with the military gentlemen,

flemen, but that they are so apt to draw their swords without occasion, that while they think they are fencing in the air, they might chance to cut my belt asunder. And what a figure I should make, when one half of me was discovered, and the other was concealed! I will not mention the consequence such a fight might produce in some of them.

But it would be of little importance to the publick to be told where I am not, unless they also know where I am. Have patience, then, good people, and you shall be satisfied.

Sometimes I step in at one or other of those gaming-houses which are above law, by being under the protection of the great; but I seldom stay long in any of them, as I can see nothing there but what I have seen an hundred times before in those lesser assemblies of the same kind that have been so justly put down by authority.

Sometimes I peep into the closet of an antiquarian, where I find matter enough to excite both my pity and contempt. What greater instance can we have of the depravity of human nature, than in a rich curmudgeon, who, while he grumbles to allow his family necessary food, cheerfully unties his bags, and pours out fifty, or, it may be, an hundred guineas, for the purchase of a bit of old copper; only because a fellow of more wit than honesty tells him it was found under the ruins of an ancient wall, where it had been buried ever since the time of Julius Cæsar, or Sæverus?

Sometimes, too, I amuse myself with turning over the collection of a virtuoso; where I am always filled with the utmost astonishment, at finding sums sufficient to endow an hospital lavished in the purchase of wings of butterflies, the shells of fishes, dried reptiles, the paw of some exotick animal, and such like baubles, neither pleasing in their prospect nor useful in their natures.

Sometimes I make one at the levee of a rich heir, just arrived from his travels to the possession of an overgrown estate; where I cannot help trembling for the future fate of the poor youth, on seeing him besieged with a crowd of marriage-brokers, pleasure-brokers, exchange-brokers, lawyers, gamesters, French tailors, Dresden milliners, petitioning harlots, congratulating poets; in fine,

with sharpers, flatterers, and sycophants, of every kind.

Sometimes I mingle in the rout of a woman of quality; see who wins, who loses, at play; and in what manner ladies are frequently obliged to pay their debts of honour.

When I have nothing better to employ my time, I loiter away some hours in St. James's Park, Kensington Gardens; or at Vauxhall, Ranelagh, and Mary-le-bon; and am often witness of some scenes exciting present mirth and future reflection.

But my chief delight is in the drawing-room of some celebrated toasts, whence I often steal into their bed-chambers.—But don't be frightened, ladies; I never carry my inspections farther than the *ruelle*.

These are some few particulars of the tour I have made. To give the whole detail would be too tedious. I shall therefore only say that, wherever I am found, I shall always be found a lover of morality; and no enemy to religion, or any of its worthy professors, of what sect or denomination soever.

And now, reader, having let thee into the secret of my history, as far as it is convenient for me to reveal, I shall leave thee to enjoy the advantage of those discoveries my invisibility enabled me to make.

CHAP. II.

CONTAINS SOME PREMISES VERY NECESSARY TO BE OBSERVED BY EVERY READER; AND ALSO AN ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S FIRST INVISIBLE VISIT.

IT was in the beginning of that season of the year which affords most food for an enquiring mind, that I had got all things in order to sally forth on my invisible progressions. The august representatives of the whole body of the people were just ready to assemble; the expounders of the Law were hurrying to Westminster Hall, and those of the Gospel to pay their compliments at St. James's. The ships of war were mostly moored; and their gallant commanders had quitted the rough, athetick toil, for the soft charms of ease and luxury. The land-heroes, who, having no employment

ployment for their swords, had passed their days in rural sports, now hunted after a different sort of game, at the theatres and masquerades. Frequent consultations were held at the toilets of the ladies, on ways and means to outshine each other in the circle. Former amours were now revived, and even new ones every day commenced. Madam Intelligence, with her thousand and ten thousand emissaries, all loaded with reports, some true, some false, flew swiftly through each quarter of this great metropolis; and had every pore of every human body been an ear, they all might have been fully gratified.

Besides the gratification of a darling passion, I had another, and much more justifiable reason, for the value I set upon the legacy of my departed friend; which is this: I have it in my power to pluck off the mask of hypocrisy from the seeming saint; to expose vice and folly in all their various modes and attitudes; to strip a bad action of all the specious pretences made to conceal or palliate it, and shew it in its native ugliness. At the same time, I have also the means to rescue injured innocence from the cruel attacks begun by envy and scandal, and propagated by prejudice and ill-nature. In fine, I am enabled, by this precious gift, to set both things and persons in their proper colours; and not in such as, either through malice or partial favour, they are frequently made to appear.

I should be sorry, however, if any thing I have said should give the reader occasion to imagine I am going to present him with a book of scandal: no; the secrets of families, and characters of persons, shall be always sacred with me. I shall give no man the opportunity of indulging a malicious pleasure of laughing at his neighbour's faults. My aim, in this work, is not to ridicule, but reform. I would touch the hearts, not call a blush upon the face. And, as few people have errors so peculiar to themselves, as there are not many guilty of the like, if the offender keeps his own counsel, he may very well pass undistinguished among the crowd of others equally culpable.

Verramond is justly accounted one of the most accomplished gentlemen of the present age. The gracefulness of his person, the engaging manner of his conversation, his fine address, and uncommon capacity, make his company de-

fired by all the young and gay part of the world; as his great learning, and perfect knowledge of men and things, render him the oracle of the more grave and serious. I had frequently the honour of meeting him at several places where I visited, and found nothing in him which could in the least contradict those high ideas fame had given me of him.

It was therefore natural for me to take the advantage of my gift of invisibility, in order to view this great person in his most retired moments; I mean, when he was alone, and divested of all those modes and ceremonies which often disguise the real man, and shew him to the publick far different from what he is.

Accordingly, the first visit I made in my Belt was at his house. I slipped in as soon as I saw the door opened, went up stairs, and passed through several rooms, till I came to that where he was sitting. I found him with a book in his hand, on which he seemed very intent. I doubted not but it was a treatise of philosophy, or some other piece of learning or wit, suitable to the capacity of so great a genius: but how much was I surprized, when, looking over his shoulder, I perceived it was Hoyle's Method of Playing the Game of Whist! He appeared more than ordinarily taken up with one page, for he read it over three or four times; then started up from his chair, and throwing the book from him in a rage—'Curse on this stuff!' cried he; 'it is good for nothing but to teach a man how to undo himself with more art.' After walking for some minutes backwards and forwards in the room with a disordered motion, he flung himself into his chair, and fell into a profound reverie; in which I know not how long he might have continued, if he had not been roused from it by the approach of a person who I presently found was his steward.

The business on which this man came into the room was no way pleasing to Verramond; but because I would avoid the troublesome repetitions of 'said he,' and 'replied he,' and 'resumed the other,' and such-like introductions to every speech, I shall present all those dialogues which are proper to be communicated to the publick, in the same manner as in the printed copies of theatrical performances.

Steward. My lord, the several tradesmen

men whom your lordship ordered to come this morning are below, and wait your lordship's commands.

Verramond. I have no commands for them at all; so send them away.

Steward. Shall I bid them attend your lordship to-morrow?

Verramond. Aye, to-morrow six months, if you will; for I shall scarce have any business with them before.

Steward. My lord, I told them they should all be paid off this morning. What excuse can I make to them for such a disappointment?

Verramond. Even what you will. If you can invent nothing better, you may tell them that you lyed when you made that promise in my name.

Steward. Your lordship knows it was by your own order I made that promise; and that you sent me into the city yesterday for money, which I doubted not but was to make good what I had told them. If your lordship pleases to consider, it is now a long time since they brought in their bills, and they have had a great deal of patience.

Verramond. Rot their patience! Do you think to make a merit to me of their patience? Go, I say; send them away, and let me hear no more of them.

The tone in which Verramond uttered these words was so austere, that the honest domestick had not courage to reply, but left the room immediately; probably to receive no softer treatment below, from those he was compelled to disappoint, than he had just met with above, for attempting to intercede in their behalf.

Lord Macro was presently after introduced. The late fullness of Verramond seemed now entirely dissipated. Whatever was in his heart, his countenance wore only smiles; and he ran to receive him with open arms, and all the testimonies of the most perfect satisfaction: and yet, as I soon found by the discourse they had together, this very Macro, the night before, had won of him at play fifteen hundred pounds, which was the sum he had set apart for the payment of his creditors. Their conversation turning wholly upon gaming, a subject neither entertaining nor improving, I shall give my readers no more than a bare specimen of it.

Lord Macro. My dear Verramond, I could not be easy till I saw you this morning: I thought you left the company somewhat abruptly last night, and was afraid your ill luck had given you some chagrin.

Verramond. Not in the least, my dear Macro. I never think any thing lost that a friend gains. But I remembered that I had some letters to write; otherwise should have staid and trusted Fortune with a brace or two of hundreds farther.

Lord Macro. As it is an honour to get the better of your lordship in any thing, so it will be no disgrace to be overcome by a person of such superior abilities; therefore, I am ready to give you your revenge when you think fit.

Verramond. Nay, as for that, Macro, it must be confessed you know the game better than I.

Here followed a long succession of mutual compliments on each other's skill in play; of which growing heartily tired, I was beginning to think of leaving the place; and should have done so, if the appearance of the steward a second time had not made me expect some change in the scene. His errand, and the success it met with, will not, perhaps, appear so extraordinary to those acquainted with the modish way of thinking, as it then did to me.

Steward. Farmer Hobson is below, my lord. The poor man has rode hard all night, on purpose to reach town this morning, and lay his miserable condition before your lordship.

Verramond. Pish! what have I to do with his condition?

Steward. He says, my lord, that his crop proved so bad last year, that he had scarce wherewith to stock the ground; that Mr. Hardmeat, your lordship's steward in the country, is very sensible of his misfortunes; yet, though there are but five quarters due, threatens to turn him out of the farm next week. He therefore humbly hopes your lordship will take compassion on him, as he has six small children, and his wife now lying in of the seventh.

Verramond. What business have such fellows to get children? Does he expect my rent shall go for the maintenance of his brats?

Steward. He begs your lordship to
B consider

consider that, for these eleven years he has rented the farm, he has always paid your lordship honestly; and does not doubt, through Providence, but to do so still, if your lordship is pleased to have patience till next harvest is over, and not ruin him at once.

Verramond. Let me hear no more of this stuff! I leave all to Mr. Hardmeat: he knows what he has to do; and I shall give myself no trouble about it.

The steward, with whose good-nature I was infinitely charmed, had his mouth open to urge something farther in behalf of the distressed farmer, but was prevented by a servant that instant coming in, and presenting a letter to Verramond; who then bid him go down, and tell the unhappy suppliant he might return home, for there was no answer to be given to his complaint.

Verramond would not open the letter he had just received till he knew who sent it; but, on his footman's informing him it came from Mr. Gamble, he hastily broke the seal, and found the contents as follows—

‘ MY EVER-HONOURED LORD,

‘ I Happened to be engaged last night at a house where the constable, with his posse, made a forcible entrance, demolished our tables, put most of the company to flight, and seized the rest. I was unluckily one of the last class; and committed to durance vile, as Hudibras says, as your lordship will perceive by the date hereof.

‘ A person here has undertaken, for a fee of five guineas, to procure my immediate discharge; and I do not doubt, by the method he proposes, but he is able to do it. I am not, however, at present, master of as many shillings: nor can any way raise the money he demands; having been obliged, the day before this accident befel me, to leave my watch, linen, and best apparel, at Mr. Grub's, in trust for a small sum required of me by the parish-officers, on account of a bastard child, which a wench of the town has done me the honour to swear I am the father of.

‘ All my hopes, therefore, of getting out of limbo, are in your lordship's generosity; which if you vouchsafe to grant me this one more proof

‘ of, I shall, if possible, be more than ever, with the most profound duty, dear patron, your devoted vassal,

‘ RICHARD GAMBLE.

‘ BRIDEWELL.

‘ P. S. I had forgot to acquaint your lordship, that I shall have need of more than the above-mentioned sum, for discharging the fees of this cursed hole; without the payment of which I cannot be released.’

Verramond hesitated not a moment to comply with this request, nor even whether he should exceed what was desired of him: he drew out his purse, put ten guineas into the footman's hands, and ordered him to run directly to Bridewell. ‘ Carry that money to Mr. Gamble, with his compliments; and let him know he should be glad to see him, as soon as he has recovered his liberty.’

Who will say now that Verramond is not liberal? But, alas! how ill-placed an act of benevolence was this? Was it not rather caprice than true charity, which induced him to bestow this money to save a common sharper from the punishment he justly merited; yet, at the same time, refuse to an honest, industrious tenant, a small respite of payment, though to preserve him and his poor family from destruction? But Gamble was a necessary person at a gaming-table; he was of importance to his pleasure that way: and the farmer being only regarded for the rent he paid, when deficient in that, must be thrown out like a piece of useless lumber, and his place occupied by some one who promised to be of greater utility.

Yet do I not think such a conduct is always to be ascribed to the fault of nature. Verramond has certainly the seeds of virtue and honour in his soul; but they are suffocated and choaked up by his immoderate love of play. Strange is it, that a man, capable of thinking so justly, will not be at the pains of thinking at all, but suffer himself to be swayed, by a darling propensity, to actions which, if he once reflected upon, he would be so far from perpetrating, that he would despise the very temptation of being guilty of!

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

PRESENTS THE READER WITH SOME PASSAGES WHICH CANNOT FAIL OF ENTERTAINING THOSE NOT INTERESTED IN THEM, AND MAY BE OF SERVICE TO THOSE WHO ARE.

AMONG the numerous troops of British toasts, there are few who shine with more distinguished lustre, in all publick places, than the beautiful Marcella. Besides an exact symmetry of features, a most delicate complexion, and a fine-turned shape, there is something peculiarly enchanting in her air and mien. I never see her, without being reminded of the celebrated description Milton gives of Eve in her state of innocence—

‘ Grace was in all her steps, heav’n in her eye,
‘ In ev’ry gesture dignity and love.’

She was married very young to Celadon; and though neither of their hearts had been consulted in the match, yet they had the reputation of living well together. They behaved to each other with the greatest complaisance in publick; and if any cause of discontent ever happened between them, both had the discretion to keep it extremely private.

I could not, therefore, expect to make any extraordinary discoveries in this family. The door, however, happening to be open one day as I passed by, I stepped in without any previous design; and, now I did so, was rather excited by curiosity of seeing some fine pictures, which I had been told were in the house, than of prying into the behaviour of the owners.

But it frequently falls out, that what we least seek we most easily find; and those things we imagine farthest from us, are in effect the nearest. In passing through the several rooms in this house, I saw Marcella writing in her closet; and never was I so much amazed as now, to find so fair a form harbour a mind capable of dictating these lines—

‘ TO FILLAMOUR.

‘ DEAREST OF YOUR SEX,

‘ **T**HANKS to the powers of love
‘ and liberty, that hated bar to
‘ all my happiness is removed for a

‘ short time! Celadon is gone upon a
‘ party of pleasure, and this night is
‘ entirely my own. If, therefore, no
‘ more agreeable engagement detains
‘ you, come here between the hours of
‘ twelve and one. I shall take care to
‘ send all the family to bed, except the
‘ faithful Rachel; who shall attend to
‘ admit you, on your giving a gentle
‘ rap against the shutter of the parlour-
‘ window next the door. Let me know
‘ by the bearer whether I may expect
‘ you; though it is a blessing I scarce
‘ doubt of, if any of that affection be
‘ sincere, as you have often vowed to
‘ the believing and passionate

‘ MARCELLA.’

Having sealed this billet, she called her chambermaid, and ordered her to send it, as directed, by a trusty porter; then threw herself upon a couch, took the novel of Sylvia and Philander, read a little in it, sighed, and seemed all dissolved in the most tender languishment; when her emissary returned, and brought this answer to her summons—

‘ TO THE CHARMING MARCELLA.

‘ DEAR ANGEL,

‘ **I** Am at present surrounded with a
‘ great deal of company, and have
‘ no opportunity to thank as I would
‘ the kindness of yours. I can only
‘ say, that nothing shall keep me from
‘ flying to my adorable Marcella at the
‘ appointed hour: till then, adieu. Be
‘ assured that I am always, with the
‘ utmost ardency, your devoted vassal,

‘ FILLAMOUR.’

The fair libertine now expressed the highest satisfaction, and immediately fell into discourse with her confidante, Rachel, concerning the manner in which this nocturnal guest should be concealed, and how neither his entrance nor his exit be discovered, or even suspected, by any of the family.

I had no curiosity to know any thing farther of this affair, so took the first opportunity of leaving the house; extremely troubled in my mind that a woman, whose beauty had so much attracted my respect, should prove herself so unworthy of it by her conduct.

B 2

‘ With

‘ With what boldness,’ said I within myself, ‘ does the lovely wanton run headlong to her ruin; fearless of guilt, and of the punishment which, one time or other, must be the unfailing consequence !

“ As if that faultless form could act no crime,

“ But Heaven, on looking on it, must forgive !”

I went home, and got my Tablets cleared from the impure contents of the above-recited epistles. I wished, indeed, to think no more of this transaction; and, to second my endeavours that way, towards evening sallied out again, equipped in my Invisible Belt, like a true knight-errant, in search of such adventures as chance should present me with.

I went to the house of an elderly lady, with whom I formerly had been acquainted. She was at that time looked upon as a pattern of piety and prudence: fathers, husbands, brothers, all who had any concern for the virtue and reputation of the female part of their family, recommended her example for their imitation; but, at last, after a long series of the most laudable and becoming actions, she at once degenerated into the very reverse of what she had been; fell into all the fashionable follies of the times, at an age when others are beginning to grow weary of them, and commenced a coquette at fifty-five.

I had been told such things, in relation to her conduct, as seemed to me too unaccountable to be believed; and was extremely sorry to find, in the visit I now made her, all those reports confirmed by the testimony of my own senses.

This lady, whom I shall distinguish by the name of Lamia, sets an high value upon herself for her great skill at picquet. She challenged Grizelda, another antiquated belle, who also pretends to be an adept in that science, to play with her for an hundred guineas the first four games in six. The other loved money; and, not doubting she should come off conqueror, readily embraced the proposal; and the night agreed upon between them for the decision of this event, happened to be that in which I went.

Grizelda came to the door just as I did; so I slipped in behind, and followed her up stairs; where she was received by Lamia with the greatest po-

liteness and shew of affection. The card-table was called for, and the ladies sat opposite to each other. I placed myself at the end of the table; that, being between them, I might have the better opportunity of observing what both did. They were now very serious, and attentive to the business they were upon: played, or rather cheated, each other with great caution; for I soon perceived that it was in this latter part of the art of gaming that the excellence of either chiefly consisted.

For a time, each was so taken up with her own *petites fourberies*, as not to have leisure to observe those practised by her adversary. At last, however, Lamia having re-taken in a card she had laid out, Grizelda perceived it, and accused her of the change. Rage and disdain, on finding herself detected, made the cheeks of the other glow with a deeper scarlet than the carmine had given them; and her eyes, even in despite of age, sparkle with fires which love and youth had never power to fill them with. The other was no less enflamed.—But their resentment will best be shewn in the expressions made use of by themselves.

Lamia. I am surprized you can suspect me guilty of so mean a thing as cheating at cards. Sure you cannot think I value the trifle we are playing for! What is an hundred guineas to me? I regard an hundred no more than a pinch of snuff.

Grizelda. Madam, I value an hundred guineas as little as yourself; but I hate to be imposed upon.

Lamia. What do you mean, Madam? Do you say I have imposed upon you?

Grizelda. I say you would have done it, Madam, if my eyes had not been quicker than your hands.

Lamia. Madam, I scorn your words! and if you were not in my house, should tell you that you lyed.

Grizelda. And if it were not in respect to your age, Madam, I should tell you that you were a base woman, and had invited me hither only to cheat me of my money.

Lamia. My age!—good lack, my age!—I leave the world to judge which of us two looks the oldest. I beg, Madam, you will not deceive yourself. It is not your long false locks, hanging dangling on each side your face, that hide the wrinkles of it.

Grizelda.



R. Smith del.

Theobald sculp.



Grizelda. I wear no plumpers, Madam! Do you not remember, when one of yours dropped out of your mouth at Lady Betty's drawing-room, how all the company were frightened at you, and cried out you had lost half your face?

I started on hearing this reproach of Grizelda, being, at that time, utterly unacquainted with the meaning of it; but, as it is highly probable that a great many of my readers may be as ignorant in this point as myself then was, I shall explain it, by giving a direction of the use and preparation of plumpers, as I have since received it from the waiting-maid of a woman of condition.

A SURE WAY TO HELP LANK CHEEKS.

TAKE a piece of the finest, cleanest sponge you can get. Cut out of it two small bolsters, and place them between your cheeks and teeth, if you have any; if not, the gums will serve to keep them up. On taking them out of your mouth, going to bed, throw them into a tea-cup of rose or orange-flower water, and let them soak all night: this will not only cleanse them from whatever impurities they may have happened to have received, but will also give a delectable flavour to the breath.—*Probatum est.*

These ladies pursued their mutual altercations for a considerable time, in a fashion which the intelligent reader may easily conceive by the sample I have given. I shall therefore only say that, after having charged each other with all the vices and foibles that either of them could think of, they at last quarrelled themselves into a reconciliation, begged each other's pardon, and went to play a second time: then fell out again; and provocations on both sides being renewed, and reproaches still growing more piquant, Lamia tore the cards, and threw them into the fire. Grizelda called for her chair, and left the house in a great fury. I gladly followed her out, being heartily sick of what I had seen between these fair, or rather unfair antagonists; but had no opportunity of getting away before, as the door had never once been opened.

It was now near two hours past midnight; and I found more satisfaction in the thoughts of going to my repose, than in

those discoveries my invisibility had entertained me with. I was making all the speed I could to my apartment for that purpose, but fate decreed it otherwise, and had contrived an accident which renewed all my former curiosity. In my way home I passed through the street where Marcella lived; and the sight of her house bringing fresh into my mind what the morning had presented, I could not keep myself from stopping short, to make reflections on the conduct of that fair fallen angel. 'She is doubtless by this time in the arms of her beloved Fillamour,' said I to myself; 'and, while revelling in the pleasures of a loose inclination, forfeits all sense of honour, duty, fame, and even what is owing to the merit of those charms nature has endowed her with; and oh! strange paradox of a vicious flame! renders herself cheap and contemptible in the eyes of the very man whose esteem she most wishes to preserve!'

How long I should have remained in this reverie I know not, but I was roused from it by the sudden appearance of Celadon, who, with a light carried before him, came hastily down the street, and knocked at his own door. To see him return at a time when I knew he was so little expected, made me not doubt but that he had received some information of the injury done him, and came in order to detect and revenge himself on the guilty pair. I trembled for poor Marcella; but what grounds I had to do so, as well as the event of this night's transaction, must be left to the next chapter.

CHAP. IV.

CONCLUDES AN ADVENTURE OF A VERY SINGULAR NATURE IN ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THE anxiety I was under to know what would become of poor Marcella, immediately determined me to follow her husband into the house. A manservant not having obeyed his lady's commands in going to bed, having something or other wherewith to employ himself in his own room, on hearing somebody at the door, looked through the window, and perceiving it was his master, flew down stairs, and gave him entrance on the first knock.

Rachel,

Rachel, who had been posted centinel in a back-parlour, in order to watch the break of day, and conduct Fillamour out of the house before any of the family were stirring, now came running out on hearing the street-door opened; but, scarce could an apparition have spread a greater terror through her whole frame than did the sight of Celadon at this juncture.

Rachel. Lord, Sir, who could have thought your honour would have come home to-night?

Celadon. I did not design it, indeed; but, is it so strange a thing that a man should change his mind?

In speaking this he was passing on, but she threw herself between him and the foot of the stairs, and catching fast hold of the sleeve of his coat, prevented him from going up, with these words:

Rachel. Oh, dear Sir! I beg you will not disturb my lady; she is gone to bed very much discomposed: pray be so good as to step into the parlour; there is a good fire, and I will go and see if she is awake, and tell her you are here.

Celadon. My wife ill! What is the matter with her?

Rachel. I do not know, Sir, but she was seized with a sort of a—— I can't tell the name of it, indeed not I; but I believe it was something like a fit; and so, Sir, she went to bed; but I will go and let her know you are come.

Celadon. No, no, she may be asleep, and it would be a pity to wake her; therefore I'll take your advice, Mrs. Rachel, and sit a little in the parlour.—Tom, do you go to bed, I shall not want any thing to-night.

The fellow did as he was commanded; and I could easily perceive, by Rachel's countenance, that she was upon the wing to be gone too; impatient, I suppose, to apprize Marcella of what had happened, and assist her in contriving some means for concealing her gallant: but whatever her thoughts were, Celadon had that moment got something in his head which effectually prevented any schemes she might otherwise have laid for securing the honour of her lady. Tom was no sooner gone than Celadon took hold of both her hands, and drew her gently into the parlour, with these words—

Celadon. Come, Mrs. Rachel, if I am so complaisant to my wife's disorder as to refrain going to bed to her, I think I may very well be allowed the pleasure

of your company, by way of consolation.

Rachel. Oh, dear Sir! what pleasure can you find in the company of such a one as I?

Celadon. As much as I can wish. Come, sit down; nay, you shall sit by me; now we are alone, there is no occasion for all this distance between us. I have a great deal to say to you; nothing, sure, was ever so lucky as my coming home to-night! I like you, I love you, and have longed, almost ever since you came into the family, for an opportunity to tell you so.

Rachel. Lord, Sir, how strangely you talk to one! I wish your honour would let me go up stairs, to see how my lady does.

Celadon. No, indeed, I shall not suffer you to run away, and leave me alone here; if my wife wants any thing she will ring her bell. Come, none of this coyness; let me tell you, child, too much reserve in private with a man who loves you, and has it in his power to make your fortune, is as unbecoming as too much familiarity would be in publick. You may depend upon it, whatever favours you bestow on me shall be returned with others no less agreeable to yourself. I know very well how a person of my station ought to behave towards one of yours in these cases, and shall act accordingly.

Rachel made no reply to all this, but hung down her head, and looked extremely silly. Celadon, interpreting her silence as a half consent to his desires, began now to add kisses and embraces to his solicitations: the warmth with which he pressed her, soon wrought the effect it was intended for; though I easily perceived the most prevailing argument he made use of was taking out his purse, and pouring twenty guineas into her lap. The transport which sparkled in the eyes of this mercenary creature, on beholding the glittering bait, put me immediately in mind of what Mr. Dryden makes Jupiter say in his play of *Amphytrion*—

‘When I made
‘This gold, I made a greater god than Jove,
‘And gave my own omnipotence away.’

But it is little to be wondered at that a girl, such as this Rachel, should fall prostrate before that reigning idol of the world

world, who has for its votaries not only men of the greatest parts and abilities, but also too many among those who make the highest professions of honour, probity, and virtue; nay, I am sorry to say, of religion: daily experience, however, and a very small observation of the corruption of the present age, evinces this melancholy truth.

So finding a scene was likely to ensue, which it was not agreeable to my inclination, or any way proper that I should be witness of, I withdrew into an adjacent parlour, where solitude, darkness, and the profound silence of every thing about me, contributed to promote the most solemn meditations. I reflected on the extreme folly, as well as wickedness, of giving way to an inordinate gratification of the senses, and the certain danger, and almost certain infamy, which attends the doing so. On this occasion several passages and accidents relating to many of my acquaintance occurred fresh to my mind; and when I remembered how some, who had been endowed by Heaven and Fortune with every requisite, excepting virtue, to compleat their happiness, yet by the want of that alone had exposed themselves to a condition the most abject and contemptible to which a reasonable being can possibly be reduced, I could not forbear crying out with the inimitable Cowley—

- * All this world's noise appears to me
- * But as a dull, ill-acted comedy.

While I was thus ruminating, and wondering within myself what would be the consequence of this night's transaction, I perceived through the crevices of the window-shutters, that the day began to break, and presently after heard a certain rustling upon the stairs: it was occasioned by Marcella and Fillamour, who, on finding Rachel did not come up as they expected, and the light was pretty far advancing, were creeping softly down. The noise Marcella made in unfastening the chain that went across the street-door, waked Celadon and Rachel, who it seems had both fallen asleep: the former, on hearing the noise, was running out of the parlour, to see what was the matter; but Rachel prevented him, by saying, she was sure it was only one of the footmen, who went out more early than ordinary to the stable. This excuse

might have solved all, if Marcella herself had not unluckily been her own betrayer. That lady, incensed beyond measure, pushed open the door of the room where Rachel was ordered to attend, beginning to upbraid before she saw her.

Marcella. So, minx, you have served me finely; it is almost broad day. I have knocked the heel of my shoe almost off; for I would not ring for fear of alarming the family. I suppose you have been asleep: this it is to place any dependance on servants.

Celadon, on hearing his wife's voice before she entered, had stepped behind a screen, either suspecting something of the truth, or because he was unwilling to be surprized with Rachel at that hour; and Rachel, doubly confounded between her lady's reproaches and the knowledge who was witness of them, that she was utterly unable to speak one word for some time, but shook her head, winked, and pointed to the screen, thinking, by those significant gestures, to prevent Marcella from saying any thing farther; till finding she was again opening her mouth, she recovered herself enough to cry out—

Rachel. Lord, Madam, do not stand talking here; you will certainly get cold, and make yourself worse; consider you are half naked; pray go to bed again.

Marcella. What does the wench mean? but I suppose you have been at the ratifia bottle, and stupified yourself, according to custom. Well, 'tis your own loss; for I dare swear Fillamour would have given you no less a present than five guineas for your diligence, if you had come up as you ought to have done: 'tis now quite light in the street, and a thousand to one but some of the neighbours may have seen him go out.

Celadon coming forward. So, Madam, I find you have been diverting yourself, and Fillamour is the man to whom I am obliged for giving you consolation in my absence.

That person must know very little of nature, who does not easily conceive what Marcella felt in so shocking a juncture; surprize, shame, and vexation for having thus foolishly exposed her guilt, quite overwhelmed her heart; she gave a great shriek, and sunk, half-fainting, into a chair. Rachel ran to her assistance, and at the same time willing to retrieve,

retrieve, if possible, told Celadon that he must not take any notice of her lady's words; that she went very ill to bed; that she was delirious, and knew not what she said. This, however, had no effect upon him; he was too well convinced of the injury that had been done him, and loaded his transgressing wife with every invective that a husband, in his circumstances, could invent.

But certainly it is impossible for any woman to behave with greater courage and resolution than Marcella now did; she presently regained her senses, and after having made Rachel leave the room, a moment's reflection served her to reply to the reproaches made her by her husband, in these terms—

Marcella. Well, Sir, I confess appearances are against me, nor do I wonder at, nor will resent the asperity of your treatment. Though guilty of no real crime, my vanity has led me into a folly which merits all you have said to me. I have not, in fact, dishonoured either myself or you, and my behaviour this night has only mortified the pride and arrogance of a man who would have rivalled you in my esteem and affection.

Celadon. Excellent, i'faith—beyond imagination. I have been told, indeed, that a woman need but look down upon her apron-string to find an excuse for the most enormous crime she can be guilty of; but this of yours is such a one, as cannot fail of giving a good deal of diversion in a court of judicature; though I scarce think it will save either Fillamour's estate from the penalty the law inflicts on an attempt to bastardize an honourable family, or his throat from the justice of my sword.

The boldness of Marcella was not to be awed by these menaces; she found he had too much understanding to be imposed upon by the shallow artifice she had made use of; that he now heartily despised her, and that she had no longer any measures to preserve with him: therefore, collecting all the courage she was mistress of, she threw her eyes upon him with a contempt equal to that which he looked upon her, and made him this reply—

Marcella. 'Tis mighty well, Sir; you are at your liberty to make use of all the weapons in your power for revenge; but I would have you to remember, that whether Fillamour cuts your throat, or

you cut his, and are hanged for it, the matter will be of little importance to me; and as for a court of judicature, I believe you will find it very difficult to make good any accusations you may exhibit against me there: no one ever saw me in bed with Fillamour, much less can prove any criminal conversation between us, so that the ridicule would turn wholly upon yourself; and perhaps provoke me, as I have had no child by you, to bring in a bill of impotency, in which case I should have all my fortune returned; a thing your present circumstances would not very well bear, as some part of your estate is already mortgaged.

To all this Celadon was able to make no other reply, than that he stood amazed at her audacity; that he found she was abandoned to all sense of shame; that she was a monster of impudence, and such like: at which she seemed not in the least moved, but proceeded to reason with him in the same determined fashion she had begun.

Marcella. Look you, Celadon, all the fury you can be possessed of will remedy nothing: let us argue like rational creatures; whatever opinion we may have of each other, the only way to preserve either of our characters, is to live well together in the eyes of the world. I tell you that I am innocent, and it is for your ease and interest, as well as mine, that you should believe I am so; which if you do, I faithfully promise to regulate my conduct in such a manner as to bring no disreputation on myself, or dishonour to you; but if you fly into extremes, you will oblige me to do the same; and, what but our mutual infamy and destruction can be the end of such a contest? I leave you to consider on what I have said, and wait your cooler moments for an answer.

With these words she went hastily out of the room. Celadon offered not to detain her, but continued walking backwards and forwards, testifying, by several disordered gestures, the inward agitations of his mind. After some moments passed in the silent expressions of his rage, he called to the servants, most of whom were now stirring, to get a bed prepared for him in another chamber; but I am of opinion, that when he retired thither, it was less to sleep than to reflect how it would best become him to behave under the

the shocking circumstance he was now involved in.

Finding no farther discoveries were likely to be made at this time, I left the house on the first opening of the street-door, and returned home; where, fatigued as I was for want of rest, the astonishment I was in at the behaviour of Marcella would not suffer the least slumber to close my eyes.

For some days I was extremely impatient to know the result of this affair; but, hearing no talk of it about town, began to conclude that the wife's arguments had prevailed, and the husband had submitted his resentment to his convenience. I soon found I was not deceived in my conjectures, for in less than a week I saw Celadon and Marcella taking the air together in their own coach, with the same appearance of serenity in both their countenances, as if nothing of the adventure I have been relating had ever happened.

CHAP. V.

SHEDS, THAT THOUGH A REMISSNESS OF CARE IN THE BRINGING UP OF CHILDREN, CAN SCARCE FAIL OF BEING ATTENDED WITH VERY BAD CONSEQUENCES; YET, THAT AN OVER EXACT CIRCUMSPECTION IN MINUTE THINGS, MAY SOMETIMES PROVE EQUALLY PERNICIOUS TO THEIR FUTURE WELFARE.

VARIOUS were the reports concerning Alinda, both while she was alive, and after her decease; but all the world could say with any certainty, either of her affairs or conduct, might be comprized in the following articles.

That she was the only child of a very eminent and wealthy merchant in the city, who, on the death of his wife, left off business, and having purchased an estate of near a thousand pounds a year in the country, retired thither to pass the remainder of his days, taking Alinda with him, at that time about ten years of age.

That through some peculiarities in his temper, she was educated in a very odd fashion, secluded from all conversation with the neighbouring gentry, and scarce

suffered to speak to any one out of their own family.

That after his death, which happened in her seventeenth year, she returned, with the consent of her guardians, to London, lived in a manner suitable to her fortune, and had many advantageous offers of marriage, all which she rejected without giving any reason for doing so.

That at one and twenty she fell into a wasting disorder, which was judged to proceed rather from some inward grief preying upon her spirits, than from any distemper of the body; it baffled, however, all the skill of the physicians, and she expired after a tedious languishment of near three years, leaving the possession of her estate to a nephew of her father's, who was the next of kin.

All these things, I say, were publick; but as to the motive which made her avoid listening to any proposals for changing her condition, or the cause of that melancholy which brought on her death, every one spoke of them as they thought proper, and according as the dispositions of their own hearts inclined them to judge.

Few, however, were charitable enough to put the best construction on her conduct; some said she was a man-hater; others, that loving the sex too well, she could not think of entering into a state which must confine her to one alone. Those who entertained the most favourable opinion, imagined she had unhappily engaged her heart where there was no possibility of a return: this last conjecture seemed indeed most probable, and gained ground after she fell into that heavy languor which excluded her from all those pleasures she had been accustomed to partake, and at length deprived her of life; but all this, to make use of the vulgar adage, was speaking without book; my gift of invisibility gave me alone the means of penetrating into the mystery.

As I had been acquainted with her, and visited her while she continued to see company, I frequently sent, or called to enquire after her health. One day when I did so, a servant belonging to her kinsman and heir at law came to the door at the same time, and we both received for answer, that she expired the night before.

The fellow ran directly to inform his
C master,

master, to whom these tidings would probably be not unwelcome; and I went home, clapped on my Belt of Invisibility, and returned in a short time to the house of Alinda. The reader will perhaps wonder for what reason, and it is not fit I should keep him in ignorance.

There was a clergyman lived in the house with her, and performed the office of a chaplain; he was a person of whom her father having conceived a high opinion, had taken into his family, and set over her in the manner of a preceptor, and he had ever since continued with her. I had several times dined with him at her table, and perceived he professed an extraordinary sanctity, and the extremest regard for the welfare of his fair patroness; and this it was that made me desirous of seeing in what manner he would behave upon her death.

I expected to have found him either in his own chamber, bewailing the early fate of so beneficent a friend, or sitting by her corpse religiously moralizing on the shadowy happiness of this transitory world; but, after seeking him in vain in these and several other rooms, at last I discovered him in a closet, where I knew she reposed her things of greatest value; he was busily employed in rummaging her bureau, from the little cell of which I saw him convey, as near as I could guess, between two and three hundred pieces of gold, and several bank-bills to a much greater amount; he then pulled out a drawer which contained her jewels; he first took up one, then another, surveyed them with a greedy eye, but laid them down again, and shut the drawer; but, after a moment's pause, opened it a second time, and took out a ring set round with large brilliants. 'I may keep this,' cried he; 'it will scarce be missed; or, if it be, I can pretend she made me a present of it in her life-time, and nobody will suspect the contrary.' Here he gave over his search, locked the bureau, put the key into his pocket, and went into his own room.

It would be hard for me to determine, whether astonishment or indignation was most predominant in me at this sight; I wished never to have beheld it, or that I had been at liberty to pluck the sacred robe from off the back of that vile prophaner of his order. I was going away with a mind more troubled than I can well express, when one of Alinda's maids

came running into the room with a sealed packet in her hand, and delivered it to this disciple of Judas Iscariot, telling him at the same time, that it had been found under her mistress's pillow just after her death, but that she had forgot in the hurry to bring it to him before.

He replied, with an affected indifference, that it was very well; that he would look over the papers, and take care that whatever injunctions they contained should be fulfilled; and with these words dismissed her.

The superscription on the cover of this packet was to a lady with whom Alinda had been extremely intimate, but had not seen for a considerable time, she being excluded, as well as the rest of her acquaintance, after she fell into that deep melancholy which ended her days. The priest immediately broke the seal, and found a little letter to the above-mentioned lady, the contents whereof were as follow—

'DEAR MADAM,

'**T**HAT I have not seen you so long has not been owing to want of friendship, but to a resolution of depriving myself of every thing that was agreeable to me in life; and that I do not now, in these last moments of my life, ask to see you, is only because I would not tax your pity with the sight of so sad an object. I am blasted, my dear friend, withered in my bloom, and scarce the shadow of what I was. The inclosed memoirs will inform you of the cruel cause, which I intreat you will publish to the world after my decease; the shocking tale may perhaps be a serviceable warning to some parents as well as children. I have given my cousin ***** orders concerning some things I would have done; among the number of which is, that he will present you with my hoop diamond ring. I beg you will accept and wear it in remembrance of your dying friend,

'ALINDA.'

He started, bent his brows, turned pale and red by turns, and seemed in great confusion while looking over this little epistle; but all his emotions were very much increased on examining the papers that accompanied it: still as he read, he tore the leaves asunder and threw them on the fire, which happening not

not to burn very fiercely, I was quick enough to snatch from the intended devastation, and convey into my pocket, while he was taken up with the remaining pages, and thought himself secure by the tale of his misdeeds being extinct in all-devouring flames.

He had but just finished, when a servant came running into the room, and told him that Mr. ***** was below; and having been informed that Alinda's keys had been delivered to him, demanded to speak with him immediately. On this, the artful hypocrite composed his countenance, drew every feature into the attitude of solemn sadness, and holding a white handkerchief to his eyes, went down to act the part he thought would best become him before the kinsman of Alinda.

I followed close at his heels into the parlour, where Mr. ***** and two other persons waited for him. He began, with well-dissembled grief, to expatiate on the loss the world had in so excellent a lady as Alinda; and failed not, in his harangue, artfully to intermix some praises on himself, for the good principles his precepts had ingrafted on her mind.

Mr. ***** seemed to take very little notice of all he said on this occasion, and prevented him from going so far as perhaps he otherwise would have done, by telling him, in a very grave and reserved tone, that he was in great haste at present; that he came thither only to give the necessary orders concerning his cousin's funeral; and that till the melancholy ceremony was over, he should put a friend in possession of the house, and whatever effects it contained; therefore expected the keys of every thing should be immediately delivered.

To this the parson replied, that he had got them into his hands with no other view than to secure them for him, who had the undoubted right to all which his dear benefactress had been mistress of: 'For indeed,' continued he, 'I apprehended some foul play might have been attempted, as at the hour of her decease she had none but servants about her, some of whom had been too lately taken into the family to have given any great proofs of their integrity.'

After this they went through every room, examining what was to be found; all which scrutiny, as yet, afforded the heir no reason for complaint. On opening the above-mentioned bureau, and

looking over Alinda's jewels, he missed not the ring he had been defrauded of; but when the other private drawers presented him so little of what he expected, he could not forbear discovering some suspicion, as it must be owned he had sufficient cause; for the person who had been before-hand with him in the search, had left no more than eight guineas and one six and-thirty piece in specie, with three or four bills of an inconsiderable value.

'I am surprized,' said Mr. ***** 'that a woman of my cousin's fortune should leave herself so bare of cash; and cannot imagine by what means she dissipated so large a yearly income.' — 'Alas, Sir!' replied the pretended zealot, with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, 'it ought not to appear strange to you, that a lady of your excellent kinswoman's charitable and benevolent disposition should refuse nothing in her power, when the cries of distress, and the moans of affliction, called for her assistance. If you would know in what manner she disposed of her money, enquire of hospitals, the prisons, and the necessitous petitioners that every day received their sustenance from her bounty, and you will find an easy account of her expences in her large and numerous donations.'

Mr. ***** only answered sullenly, that he should be better able to judge how he ought to think of the affair after he had spoke to her steward. On which the other, clapping his hand upon his breast, was beginning to make many asseverations, that till that moment he never knew what sum or sums the lady had by her when she died, or had ever looked, nor even entertained a thought of looking into any place where it might be supposed she kept her money. I staid not, however, to hear what effect his hypocrisy produced, but went home, being impatient to see the contents of Alinda's manuscript.

CHAP. VI.

WILL FULLY SATISFY THE CURIOSITY THE FORMER MAY HAVE EXCITED.

THE haste I made in snatching the following papers from the flames; happily preserved them so entirely from

the destruction to which they had been destined, that though the edges were in many places much scorched, yet not a single word throughout the whole was any way damaged; and the reader may depend on having the story as perfect as if he saw it in the heroine's own hand.

MEMOIRS OF THE UNFORTUNATE
ALINDA, WROTE BY HERSELF,
AND FAITHFULLY TRANSCRIBED
FROM THE ORIGINAL COPY.

' I Am sensible that many people have
' been very busy with my fame while
' living; nor do I expect to be treated
' with less severity after I am dead: I
' cannot, however, think of an eternal
' separation from this world, without
' leaving something behind me which
' may serve to clear up those passages in
' my conduct which, by their being
' mysterious, have given room for cen-
' sure; and I do not this with any view
' of softening the asperity of the ill-
' natured for the errors I have been
' guilty of, or of exciting compassion
' in the more generous and gentle for
' my misfortunes, but merely to the end
' that, if I am condemned, I may be
' condemned for real, not imaginary,
' facts.

' Sorry am I to accuse a father who
' tenderly loved me: yet certain it is,
' that his over anxiety for my welfare
' has been the primary source of every
' woe my heart has laboured under;
' and that, by his mistaken endeavours
' to make me great and happy, I have
' been rendered the most miserable of
' created beings.

' The fortune I was born to be pos-
' sessed of, and some natural endow-
' ments his affection fancied in me,
' made him flatter himself with the hopes
' of seeing me one day blaze forth in all
' the pomp of quality; nor could he
' endure the thoughts of marrying me
' to any man beneath the rank of right
' honourable: and for fear any partial
' inclination of my own should disap-
' point these high-raised expectations,
' he kept me from the conversation of
' every one whom he thought capable of
' attracting a heart unbiassed by inte-
' rest and unambitious of grandeur.

' Soon after my mother's death, he
' quitted business, and retired to an

' estate he had some time before pur-
' chased in the country. When we
' removed, I was too young to have any
' taste for the pleasures of the town,
' and regretted only the want of those
' play-fellows I had left behind: in-
' deed, I wonder that I was not quite
' moped. I was suffered to go to no
' school, though there was a great one
' very near us; never stirred beyond the
' precincts of our garden-walls; went
' not to church, because there it would
' have been impossible for me not to see
' and be seen. No company visited us;
' for my father deprived himself of the
' pleasure of conversing with any of the
' neighbouring gentry, for fear that, as
' I grew up, I might take a liking to
' some one or other of their sons, none
' of whom he thought a match good
' enough for me, as they were not dig-
' nified with titles. I had learned writ-
' ing and dancing, but was far from
' being perfect in either; and my fa-
' ther, being unwilling I should be
' without these accomplishments, took
' the pains himself to set me copies to
' improve me in the one; and at length
' provided a master, too old and too
' ugly to give him any apprehensions,
' to instruct me in the other. Besides
' these two avocations, I had no amuse-
' ment except reading; which, as I
' much delighted in, my father con-
' stantly supplied me with such books
' as he thought proper for my sex and
' age.

' Excepting some treatises of divi-
' nity, the subjects of my entertainment
' afforded little improvement to my un-
' derstanding, they consisting only in
' romances, and some very old plays;
' so that the ideas they inspired me with
' were as antiquated as the habits worn
' in the days of Queen Elizabeth; and
' I was utterly ignorant of the modes,
' manners, and customs, of the age I
' lived in.

' In this stupid and dispiriting
' situation did I pass full nineteen
' months; about the expiration of
' which time, my father happened into
' company with a person who wears the
' sacred appearance of an ecclesiastick,
' but is in reality one of those men-
' tioned in Holy Writ by the name of
' wolves in sheeps cloathing. His out-
' ward behaviour seems directed by the
' ministers of grace and goodness, while

in his treacherous heart a thousand fiends lie in wait to bring ruin and destruction on the credulous listener to his wiles.—But, before I proceed in my unhappy story, it is fit I should give a more particular character of the wretch who has so great a share in it.

First, for his extraction.—His father was a Frenchman, servant to a person of distinction in Normandy: but having more ambition than honesty, found means to rob his master of a considerable sum, and came over to England, where he set up for a gentleman, and a most zealous Protestant; told a long plausible story of the great hardships he had sustained on the score of religion, and found here the same pity and encouragement as many others had done who fly here for an asylum on the same pretences.

Soon after his arrival, he married a Dutchwoman, by whom he had a son who inherits all his father's virtues, and is the person whose story is so unhappily interwoven with my own.

Young Le Bris (for that is the name of this worthy family) discovered in his youth some indications of a good capacity for learning; insomuch that a certain lord, taking a great fancy to him, sent him to Westminster School, and afterwards to the university, in order to qualify him for the pulpit; assuring him, that he should not be without a benefice as soon as he should be fit to receive it.

But he had scarce completed his studies for that purpose, when all his present support and future expectations vanished, on the sudden death of his noble patron; which was followed, in a few months after, by that of his father; so that he was left entirely destitute, his mother not being able to afford him the least assistance.

After many long and fruitless solicitations for a living, he was glad to accept of a small curacy in one of the remotest counties in England, where he resided several years; but was at last turned out on account of neglect of duty, and other misbehaviour. He then came back to London, and gave out printed bills for teaching French and Latin at very low rates; but finding little encouragement that way, turned Fleet parson, and earned a pre-

carious sustenance by clandestine marriages.

It was in these wretched circumstances that my father met with him, being in town on some business; and being told by some one, who it is likely knew no more of him than what he was pleased to say of himself, that he was a very worthy, though distressed clergyman, made him the offer of a handsome salary to come into his family by way of chaplain; and withal, to instruct me in the French language, and whatever else was fit for me to learn, or he was capable of teaching. He readily embraced the proposal; and, on my father's return, came down with him.

My father presented him to me as a kind of tutor or preceptor; told me I must submit myself to his directions; be attentive to all he said to me; and, in every thing, treat him with the greatest respect and reverence: "For," added he, "it is by the lessons he is capable of giving you, that you alone can make any shining figure in the station wherein I hope to see you placed."

It will, perhaps, afford some matter of surprize, that my father, who had hitherto preserved such an extreme caution in preventing my having the least conversation with any man, should now so strenuously recommend this person to me: but it must be considered, that he was no less than six or seven and forty years of age; that, though not deformed, he was far from handsome; and, besides, had a certain austerity in his manners which could not be very agreeable to youth.

It was, indeed, some time before I could be contented with the dominion given him over me; but my obedience to my father obliging me to behave towards him with esteem, custom at last converted that complaisance, which was at first no more than feigned, into sincere. A kind of affection, by degrees, mingled itself with the reverence I was bid to pay him; I was never so happy as in the hours set apart for receiving his instructions; and the thoughts of the benefits that might be supposed to accrue from them, afforded less pleasure than the praises I was always certain he would bestow on my docility.

In fine, I not only loved the teacher

for

‘ for the precept’s sake, but, as the poet
‘ says—

“ I lov’d the precepts for the teacher’s
“ fake.”

‘ Nor is it to be wondered at that I
‘ tasted more satisfaction in his society
‘ than I had ever known before. I
‘ wanted not ideas, though hitherto I
‘ had nothing to improve them. I had
‘ been allowed to converse with none
‘ but the servants ; who could only di-
‘ vert me with idle tales of thieves, appa-
‘ ritions, and haunted houses. My tu-
‘ tor, after having finished his graver
‘ lessons, would frequently entertain me
‘ with some extraordinary incident or
‘ other, either taken from history or ro-
‘ mance; but whether real or fictitious,
‘ I had sense enough to know were
‘ such as enlarged my understanding as
‘ well as charmed my ears.

‘ It is certain, indeed, that he spared
‘ no pains to insinuate himself into my
‘ good graces; and no less certain also,
‘ that the ungrateful design he had in
‘ doing so succeeded, to the utter de-
‘ struction of the whole happiness of my
‘ future life, and, at last, of my life it-
‘ self, as will appear by these memoirs;
‘ which, while I am writing, I know
‘ not whether I shall have strength to
‘ finish.

‘ I shall therefore reduce my unhappy
‘ story into as short a compass as I can.
‘ In spite of the little amiableness this
‘ tutor had in his person, in spite of the
‘ vast disparity of years between us, I
‘ conceived the most tender affection for
‘ him. Alas! I was then too young,
‘ too innocent, to know what was
‘ meant by the word Love, any farther
‘ than that love which we naturally bear
‘ to a father, brother, or some other
‘ near relation; and thought not what
‘ I felt for him was any more, or would
‘ be attended with any other conse-
‘ quences; and, as I apprehended no
‘ shame or danger in the kindness I had
‘ for him, endeavoured not to put a stop
‘ to the growth of it, nor even to con-
‘ ceal it.

‘ But Le Bris saw much better into
‘ my heart than I did myself; and dread-
‘ ing lest my father should be alarmed
‘ at the too open fondness of my beha-
‘ viour to him, began to treat me with
‘ less familiarity, and exerted the ma-

‘ ster much more than he had done.
‘ This change both surprized and grieved
‘ me: I bore it, however, for two whole
‘ days, without seeming to take any no-
‘ tice of it; but on the third, being alone
‘ with him in his closet, where I con-
‘ stantly went every morning to receive
‘ my lessons—“ What is the matter
‘ with you, my dear tutor?” said I; “ I
‘ hope I have done nothing to offend
‘ you? I am sure I would not wil-
‘ lingly be guilty of deserving that you
‘ should frown upon me.”—“ No,
‘ my precious charge,” replied he, af-
‘ ter a pause, “ it is not in your na-
‘ ture to give offence; but I would not
‘ incur your father’s displeasure either
‘ towards you or me. Men are apt to
‘ be jealous of the affections of their
‘ children; and I am sometimes afraid
‘ that he should think you love me al-
‘ most as well as you do him.”—“ In-
‘ deed I do so—quite as well,” cried I
‘ eagerly. “ But why should he be an-
‘ gry at that, when he bid me use you
‘ with the same love and respect as I
‘ did himself?”

“ People, on some occasions,” an-
‘ swered he, “ will be displeased at a
‘ too exact performance of their own
‘ commands; and if my worthy patron,
‘ your father, should happen to be of
‘ this opinion, the consequence would
‘ infallibly be an eternal separation be-
‘ tween us; he would drive me from
‘ his house, and I should never see my
‘ pretty charge again.”

“ If you think so,” returned I,
‘ though I hate all kind of dissimula-
‘ tion, I will make him believe I am
‘ weary of learning of you, and that I
‘ cannot abide you.”—“ Dear, pretty
‘ angel!” cried he, tenderly taking me
‘ in his arms, “ there is no need of go-
‘ ing to such extremes; I would only
‘ have you behave with more distance
‘ towards me than you have done of
‘ late: and it will not be amiss if you
‘ sometimes complain that I set you too
‘ hard lessons; because, if you should
‘ seem to learn too fast, he may begin
‘ to think there will soon be no occasion
‘ for a tutor.”—“ Well,” said I, “ I
‘ will do every thing you bid me; for
‘ indeed it would almost break my heart
‘ to part with you.” Here he kissed
‘ off the tears that fell from my eyes in
‘ speaking these last words, and I re-
‘ turned all his endearments with the

‘ same

‘ same affection as the fondest child
‘ would do those of the most indulgent
‘ parent.

‘ It will perhaps seem a little strange,
‘ that a girl turned of thirteen, as I
‘ then was, should think or act in the
‘ manner I did; but the way in which I
‘ had been brought up, left me in the
‘ same ignorance and innocence as
‘ others of six or seven years old.

‘ I obeyed his instructions with so
‘ much exactness, that my father was
‘ far from suspecting either my folly, or
‘ the baseness of the person he had set
‘ over me. The rest of the family were
‘ no more quick-sighted; nor could it
‘ be expected they should be so. Our
‘ house-keeper, though a very good, was
‘ a silly old woman, and knew nothing
‘ beyond the œconomy of those affairs
‘ committed to her charge. The maid
‘ who waited on me was her daughter,
‘ and had been bred to think every man
‘ who wore the habit of a parson was
‘ to be worshipped; and the other ser-
‘ vants were too seldom with us to have
‘ any opportunity of making disco-
‘ veries.

‘ I arrived at my fourteenth year.
‘ My father kept my birth-day so far,
‘ as to order something better than ordi-
‘ nary for dinner, and drank my health
‘ several times at table. Among other
‘ discourse concerning me, he said to
‘ Le Bris—“ Well, doctor, your pupil
‘ will now begin to think herself a wo-
‘ man, and I must find a husband for
‘ her who will be able to reward the
‘ care you have taken of her with a
‘ good fat benefice.” To which the
‘ fawning hypocrite replied, that the
‘ pleasure of seeing his worthy patron’s
‘ daughter happy would be to him the
‘ best benefice he could obtain.

‘ Nothing farther passed, at this time,
‘ on the same subject; but the next morn-
‘ ing, when I was alone with my tutor
‘ in his closet—“ Do you remember,
‘ my dear Miss,” cried he, with a very
‘ melancholy air, “ what your father
‘ said yesterday? You will be mar-
‘ ried soon, and I shall lose you for
‘ ever!”—“ Do not talk so,” replied I
‘ hastily; “ I do not want to be mar-
‘ ried: but if my father should compel
‘ me to it, all the husbands in the world
‘ should not make me forget you; no,
‘ you shall always live with me; I
‘ would not part from you to be a
‘ dutchess.”—“ Nor would I part

“ from you,” said he, taking me in his
‘ arms, “ for an archbishoprick. And
‘ to be plain,” continued he, “ I have
‘ received letters since I have been here,
‘ with the offers of several great livings;
‘ but I have refused them all, rather
‘ than quit my dear pupil.”—“ Have
‘ you, indeed?” returned I, hanging
‘ fondly on him; “ Oh how kind you
‘ have been! I should be the most un-
‘ grateful creature upon earth, if I did
‘ not love you dearly for it.”—“ But
‘ will you always keep me with you?”
‘ cried he. “ As long as I live,” an-
‘ swered I. “ Will you swear it?” re-
‘ joined he. “ Yes,” answered I; “ a
‘ thousand and a thousand times over,
‘ if you desire it.”

‘ The wretch did not fail to take me
‘ at my word: I bound myself, by the
‘ most solemn imprecations that words
‘ could form, that, when I became mis-
‘ tress of my actions, he should always
‘ live with me. After this, the hours
‘ we passed together were employed more
‘ in improving the foolish affection I had
‘ for him, than in any lessons for im-
‘ proving my understanding. My fa-
‘ ther imputed the slow progress I made
‘ in my studies not to any want of abi-
‘ lities in my teacher, but to my own
‘ neglect, and often chid me for it;
‘ which I bore patiently, as I believed it
‘ the surest means of keeping my dear
‘ tutor with me. This he took so kindly,
‘ that he told me one day, he flattered
‘ himself I loved him almost as well as
‘ I did my father. “ I hope it is no
‘ sin,” cried I childishly, “ if I love
‘ you quite as well.”—“ Far from it,”
‘ answered he: “ you are only his
‘ daughter by nature, but you are mine
‘ by affection; you are the child of my
‘ soul, and therefore ought to love
‘ me better.”—“ I am glad of that,”
‘ rejoined I; “ for indeed I do love you
‘ a great deal better—I am sure I do.”
‘ It will scarce be doubted but that he
‘ now bestowed upon me those endear-
‘ ments I had declared myself so well sa-
‘ tisfied with; and some minutes after,
‘ as I had turned to a looking-glass to
‘ adjust some disorder in my head-dress,
‘ he pulled me to him, and making me
‘ sit upon his knee—“ You are very
‘ pretty, my dear,” said he; “ and
‘ have no defect in your shape, but be-
‘ ing a little too flat before.” With
‘ these words, he thrust one of his hands
‘ within my stays; telling me, that
‘ handling

‘handling my breasts would make them grow, and I should then be a perfect beauty.

‘Not conscious of any guilt, I was ignorant of shame; and thinking every thing he did was right, made not the least resistance; but suffered him, by degrees, to proceed to liberties, which had I known the meaning of, I should have stabbed him for attempting; but, as I have somewhere read—

‘By no example warn’d how to beware,
‘My very innocence became my snare.”

‘It will perhaps be supposed, that the perfidious man did not stop here, but proceeded yet farther, to the utter completion of my dishonour; but I shall do him the justice to say, that he never offered any such thing; though I have good reasons to believe he was prevented only by his fear of the consequences that might have attended it, to the ruin of a design which promised him more satisfaction than the enjoyment of my person.

‘In the ridiculous way I have been describing did we continue till I was in my seventeenth year; about which time, my father being obliged to go to London on a law affair, he left the sole management of the family, as well as of myself, to his favourite chaplain, till he should return, which he expected to do in two months.

‘He had not been gone full three weeks before a stranger came to our house on a visit to my tutor: he received him with great marks of civility; and told me afterwards that he was the land-steward of a nobleman, who had sent him on purpose to court his acceptance of a benefice worth near eight hundred pounds per annum. As I suspected not the truth of this, I was terribly frightened; and cried out—“Then you will leave me at last!”—“It would be with an extreme reluctance I should do so,” replied he; “but what can I do? If I should hereafter be exposed to any misfortunes, how would the world blame me for having refused such an offer?”—“What misfortunes,” said I, “have you to fear? I shall always have enough to support my dear tutor.”

“My dear child,” resumed he, “you forget that, when once you are mar-

ried, there will be nothing in your power; all will be your husband’s, who may take it into his head to turn me out of doors directly.”—“No such matter,” replied I hastily; “for I will make him promise and swear beforehand to keep you always in the family.”—“Few men,” said he, “pay any regard, after they become husbands, to the promises and vows they made when they were lovers. In fine, my little angel,” continued he, taking me tenderly in his arms, “there is but one way to secure our lasting happiness, to which if you agree, I will immediately refuse the great offer now made me, with all my future hopes of rising in the church, and devote myself eternally to you.”

‘These last words I thought so highly obliging to me, that I hung about his neck, kissed his cheek, and cried I would do every thing he would have me. He then told me that a writing should be drawn up between us, by which we should mutually bind ourselves, under the penalty of the half of what either should be possessed of, never to separate.

‘On my ready compliance with this proposal, he ventured to make a second, even more impudent than the first. After seeming to consider a little within himself—“I have been thinking,” said he, “that if the person you shall marry should happen to be of a cross, perverse nature, though for his own sake he will not drive me from his house, yet he may use me so ill as to compel me to go out of it of my own accord: suppose, therefore, you should bind yourself by the writing I have mentioned, and under the same penalty, never to marry any man without my consent?”

“Bless me!” cried I, a little surprized, “how can I do this? You know I must obey my father.”—“Heaven forbid you should do otherwise!” rejoined the artful hypocrite; “you may be sure I shall never oppose either his will, or your own inclination, in the choice of a husband: what I speak of is only a thing of form, which, when shewn to your husband, will oblige him to treat me with gratitude and respect.”

‘I was entirely satisfied with this; and replied, I would do what he desired

“fired as soon as he pleased: on which—
 “It happens luckily,” said he, “that
 “the gentleman who came here on the
 “business I told you of was bred to
 “the law; I will let him know as
 “much as is necessary of our affair,
 “and get him to draw up a proper in-
 “strument.” In speaking these words,
 “he left me, and went in search of his
 “friend, who at that time was walking
 “in the garden, waiting, no doubt, his
 “coming.

“I had little time allowed me to re-
 “flect on what I was about to do. Le
 “Bris immediately returned, bringing
 “the lawyer with him; the latter of
 “whom desired to receive instructions
 “from my own mouth for what he was
 “to write; and accordingly I repeated
 “the sense of the obligation I was to lay
 “myself under, leaving it to him to put
 “it in such words as he should find
 “proper. If I had been mistress of the
 “least share of common reason, I must
 “have seen that all this scheme was a
 “thing previously concerted between
 “these two villains; for the lawyer im-
 “mediately pulled out of his pocket a
 “large parchment, with seals fixed to
 “it, and every thing requisite to make
 “the instrument firm and valid: but I
 “was infatuated; all my little under-
 “standing was subjected to the will of
 “this wicked tutor; I gave an implicit
 “faith to all he said, and paid an im-
 “plicit obedience to all his dictates.

“The lawyer took his leave next day,
 “and nothing material happened till
 “within a week of the time my father
 “was expected home; when, instead of
 “himself, came the melancholy account
 “that he had been seized with an apo-
 “plectick fit, and, though he recovered
 “from it, expired within two hours
 “after. He had made his will about
 “a year before, by which he left me sole
 “heir of every thing he was in possession
 “of, except a few legacies; and in case
 “his demise should happen before I
 “was married, or of age appointed
 “two gentlemen for his executors and
 “my guardians. They both wrote to
 “me, as did also my cousin *****, ac-
 “quainting me that it was necessary I
 “should come to London directly on
 “this occasion, and each inviting me
 “to their respective houses; which, as
 “they lived in different parts of the
 “town, I was at liberty to chuse which
 “I liked best,

“My tutor, however, dissuaded me
 “from accepting any of their offers;
 “and told me he would write to a friend
 “in London to provide a ready-fur-
 “nished house for my reception, till
 “things were settled, and I should re-
 “solve whether I would reside in town
 “or country. Accordingly he did so;
 “and when we came within ten miles
 “of London, we were met on the road by
 “the lawyer, who, as I have since dis-
 “covered, was his chief agent in every
 “thing. He conducted us to a house
 “in Jermyn Street, which was indeed
 “very neat and commodious.

“It was late when we arrived; but
 “I did not fail to send the next morn-
 “ing to my two guardians and cousin
 “*****, who all came to see me the
 “same day, and expressed themselves in
 “very affectionate terms. I presented
 “my tutor to them, as a person for
 “whom my father had a high esteem;
 “on which they treated him with that
 “respect they supposed him to deserve.

“I now entered into a scene of life al-
 “together new to me. Several distant
 “relations, whom I knew only by their
 “names, and many other gentlemen
 “and ladies who had been acquainted
 “with my mother, came to pay their
 “respects to me. All my mornings
 “were taken up with messages and
 “compliments; and all my afternoons
 “with receiving and returning visits.
 “How strange was the transition! From
 “being confined to the narrow precincts
 “of a lone country mansion, I had now
 “the whole metropolis to range in;
 “instead of the grave lessons of two old
 “men, my ears were now continually
 “filled with the flattering praises of ad-
 “dressing beaux; instead of having no-
 “thing to amuse my hours, new di-
 “versions, new entertainments, crowded
 “upon each moment; and I was in-
 “cessantly hurried from one pleasure to
 “another, till my head grew giddy with
 “the whirl of promiscuous pleasures.

“As I was young, not ugly, and
 “looked upon as a rich heiress, pro-
 “posals of marriage were every day
 “made to me; all which I communi-
 “cated to my tutor: but though many
 “of them were much to my advantage,
 “he always found some pretence or
 “other for refusing his consent; and I
 “accordingly rejected them to the sur-
 “prize of all who knew me, and the great
 “dissatisfaction of my best friends.

‘ He was not, however, half-pleased with the gay manner in which I lived; and, as soon as the affairs relating to my estate were settled, would fain have prevailed upon me to return into the country: but I had too high a relish for the diversions of the town to pay that regard to his advice I had formerly done; and, instead of complying with it, quitted the house I was in, hired another upon lease, and furnished it in the most elegant manner I could. He grew very grave on my behaviour; but as I kept firm to both the engagements I had made with him, he had no pretence to complain of my actions in other matters.

‘ For a time, indeed, my head was not the least turned towards marriage: I thought no farther of the men than to be vain and delighted with their flatteries. Happy would it have been for me had I continued always in this mind! But my ill fate too soon, alas! presented me with an object which convinced me that all the joys of publick admiration are nothing, when compared to one soft hour with the youth we love, and by whom we think we are beloved.

‘ I believe there is little need for me to say that this object, so enchanting to my senses, was the young, the handsome, the accomplished Amasis. The world, to whom he made no secret of the passion he professed for me, was also witness in what manner I received it: we appeared together in all publick places; I treated him in all companies with a deference which shewed the esteem I had for him. My friends approved my choice; and the union between us was looked upon as a thing so absolutely determined, that many believed the ceremony was already over, when, to their great surprize, they saw at once that we were utterly broke off; and, in a very short time after, the ungrateful Amasis became the husband of another.

‘ My tutor, on perceiving me inclined to favour Amasis more than I had ever done any of those who had hitherto addressed me, began to rail at him, and tell me a thousand ridiculous stories he pretended to have heard in relation to his conduct. I still retained too much reverence for this wicked man to contradict what he said, but not enough to enable me to conquer

my new passion: I loved Amasis, and continued to give him daily proofs of it. This so incensed him, that he told me, one day, that he wondered I would encourage the courtship of a man whom I must never expect to marry. “Why not, Sir?” answered I: “neither his birth nor fortune are inferior to mine.”—“Suppose them so,” rejoined he, “the most material thing is wanting, which is my consent.”—“When I gave you that power over me,” said I, “you promised never to thwart my inclination.”—“I did so,” replied he; “but, to be plain with you, I then expected all your inclination would be in favour of myself.”—“Yourself!” cried I, more surprized than words can describe. “Yes, Alinda,” resumed he; “methinks the thing should not appear so odd to you. Call back to your remembrance the familiarities that have passed between us, and then justify, if you can, to virtue or to modesty, the least desire of giving yourself to any other man.”

‘ Rage, astonishment, and shame, for the folly I had been guilty of, so overwhelmed my heart at this reproach, that I had not power to speak one word; but stood looking on him with a countenance which, I believe, sufficiently expressed all those passions, while he went on in these terms—

“How often,” continued he, “have you hung about my neck whole hours together, and, by the warmest fondness, tempted me to take every freedom with you but the last; which, if I had not been possessed of more honour than you now shew of constancy, I also should have seized, and left you nothing to bestow upon a rival?”

‘ The storm which had been gathering in my breast all the time he had been speaking, now burst out with the extremest violence: I raved, and loaded him with epithets not very becoming in me to make use of, yet not worse than he deserved. He heard me with a sullen silence; but when I mentioned the cruelty and baseness of upbraiding me with the follies of my childish innocence, he told me with a sneer, that he would advise me not to put that among my catalogue of complaints: “For,” said he, “the world will scarce believe, that a lady of
“fourteen,

"fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen, had the same inclinations in toying with a gentleman as a baby has with it's nurse."

"I would have replied, that the manner in which I was educated kept me in the same ignorance as a baby; but something within rose in my throat, stopping the passage of my breath, and I sunk fainting in the chair where I was sitting. Whether he was really moved with this sight, or only affected to be so, I know not; but he ran to me, used proper means to bring me to myself, and, on my recovery, I found myself pressed very tenderly within his arms. His touch was now grown odious to me; I struggled to get loose. "Be not thus unkind," cried he, holding me still faster; "you once took pleasure in my embraces, you have confessed you did. Oh! then, recall those soft ideas, and we shall both be happy!"

"No!" answered I, breaking forcibly from him; "what then was the effect of too much innocence, would be now a guilt for which I should detest myself as much as I do you!"—"I still love you," said he. "Prove it, then," cried I fiercely, "by giving me up that writing which your artifices ensnared me to sign, and cease to oppose my marriage with Amasis."—"No, Madam," replied he, "if you persist in the resolution of marrying Amasis, half your estate would be a small consolation to me for the loss of you; and you cannot sure imagine me to be weak enough to resign my claim to the one, after being deprived of the other!"

"I had not patience to continue this discourse, but retired to my chamber; where, throwing myself upon the bed, I vented some part of the anguish of my mind in a flood of tears: after which, finding some little ease, I began to reflect, that tormenting myself in this manner would avail nothing; and that I ought rather to try if any possible means could be found for extricating me from the labyrinth I was entangled in.

"Accordingly I arose, muffled myself up as well as I could to prevent being known, took a hackney-coach, and went to the chambers of an eminent lawyer. I related to him all the circumstances of my unhappy case,

concealing only the names of the persons concerned in it. He listened attentively to what I said; and when I had done, asked me of what age I was when I entered into that engagement. I now wanted to be freed from; which question I answering with sincerity, he shook his head, and told me that he was sorry to assure me I could have no relief from law; and that the best, and, indeed, the only method I could take, was to endeavour to compromise the affair with the gentleman.

"I returned home very disconsolate, and was above a week without being able to resolve on any thing; but my impatience to be united to the man I loved, and at the same time eased of the presence of the man I hated, at last determined me to follow the lawyer's advice. I sent for my wicked tutor into my chamber; talked to him in more obliging terms than I had done since the first discovery of his designs upon me; but represented to him the absurdity of thinking of marrying me himself; and concluded with telling him, that if he would cancel the engagement between us, I would make him a gratuity of a thousand pounds, and also be ready to do him any other service in my power.

"He rejected this proposal with the greatest contempt. "You are certainly mad, Alinda," said he, "or take me to be so! A thousand pounds would be a fine equivalent, indeed, for the half of your estate, jewels, rich furniture, plate, and whatever else you are in possession of; to all which your marriage will give me an undoubted claim, and I accordingly shall seize."—"Suppose I never marry?" cried I. "Be it so," answered he; "I must still continue to live with you; and what you offer for my quitting you does not amount to five years purchase of my salary and board as your chaplain."

"These words making me imagine his chief objection was to the smallness of the sum, I told him I would double, nay, even treble it, for the purchase of my liberty; but he told me it would be in vain for me to tempt him with any offers of that kind; that no consideration whatever should prevail with him to depart from the agreement between us; and he would always hold me to my bargain.

‘ The determined air with which he spoke this, made me think it best not to urge him any farther at that time. The next day, however, and several succeeding ones, I failed not to renew the discourse; but though I made use of every argument my reason could supply me with; though I wept, prayed, raved, by turns cajoled and threatened; all I could say, all I could do, was ineffectual; and the more I laboured to bring him to compliance, the more stubborn his obstinacy grew.

‘ To make any one sensible what it was I suffered in this cruel dilemma, they must also be made sensible to what an infinite degree I loved the man whom it was now impossible for me to be happy with; and both these are inexpressible: I shall therefore only say, that I was very near being totally deprived of that little share of reason Heaven had bestowed upon me.

‘ Amasis, to whom I had confessed the tenderness I had for him, was all this while continually soliciting me to compleat our union. One day, when he was more than ordinarily pressing on this occasion, and my heart being very full, I cried out, almost without knowing what I said—“ Oh, Amasis! you know not what you ask, when you ask me to marry you!” This exclamation surprized him: but having begun, I now went on—“ You expect,” said I, “ an estate of twelve hundred pounds a year; but I will not deceive you, you find me worth only the half of what you have been made to hope.”—“ When I made my addresses to the lovely Alinda,” answered he, “ I had no eye to the fortune she might bring me. But wherefore this fruitless trial of my love? Your guardians have shewn me the writings of your estate; and I know to a single hundred what you are possessed of.”—“ Suppose,” rejoined I, “ that I should have previously disposed of the one half of what otherwise our marriage would have given you?”—“ I will suppose no such thing,” replied he; “ it cannot be!”—“ It both can, and is,” said I, bursting into tears; “ I have unwarily entered into an engagement, by which I forfeit the moiety of all I am mistress of, even

“ to my very jewels, if ever I marry any man, except on certain conditions; which condition, I am now well assured, I never can obtain.”

“ Death!” cried he, starting up in a fury, “ What condition?—When!—Where!—To whom!—On what account was this engagement made!” Shame would not let me answer to these interrogatories, and I remained in a kind of stupid silence. “ If by any artifices,” pursued he, “ you have been seduced to sign a compact of this wild nature, unfold the whole of the affair, and depend, that either the laws, or this avenging arm, shall do you justice.” I now repented that I had so rashly divulged any part of this fatal secret; not but I should have been glad to have seen my wicked tutor punished; but I knew that, on the least attempt made for my redress, he would infallibly expose the follies I had been guilty of in regard to him; and, when compared with the loss of Amasis, my fortune, or even my life itself, seemed a less terrible misfortune: for this reason, therefore, I refused the entreaties of a beloved lover, and screened the villainy of a wretch whom my soul abhorred. In fine, I would reveal no more than I had done. Amasis left me in a very ill humour; and the next morning I received a billet from him, containing these stabbing lines—

“ TO MISS ALINDA *****.

“ MADAM,

“ I Have been considering on the “ amazing account you gave me last night; and as you refuse to discover either the person with whom you made this engagement, or the motives which induced you to it, can look on it as no other than a contract with some gentleman once happy in your affections. A second-hand passion neither suits with the delicacy of my humour, nor to encroach upon the rights of another with my honour: I shall therefore desist troubling you with any future visits, but shall be always glad to hear of your welfare, which I despair of doing till you prevail upon yourself to be just to your first vows. Sacrifice the
“ affection

"affection you have for me to the
 "obligations you are under to my
 "rival. I yield to his prior title all the
 "late glorious hopes I had conceived;
 "and wish you more happy with him,
 "than it is now in your power to make
 "your humble servant,

"AMASIS."

'Here ended all my hopes of happiness; all the soft ideas of love and marriage vanished for ever from my breast, and were succeeded by others of the most dreadful nature. For several weeks I abandoned myself to grief and to despair, but pride at length got the better of these passions; and, to conceal the real situation of my heart from the enquiring world, I all at once affected to be madly gay, and ran into such extravagancies, as, without being criminal in fact, justly drew upon me the severest censures.

'But nature will not bear a perpetual violence. Grief and despair were the strongest passions in me. In the midst of dancing tears were ready to start from my eyes, and sighs from my bosom, which, when I endeavoured to suppress, recoiled upon my heart, and shook my frame with the most terrible revulsions. The marriage of Amasis seconded the blow our parting had given: I could no longer dissemble what I felt, no longer appear the giddy, thoughtless libertine, but flew from one extreme to the other. I now would see no company, shut myself up in my chamber, denied access to my best friends, and never went abroad. I suffered not Le Bris to come into my presence; and, I believe, perceiving me so resolute, he would have accepted of a sum of money to have quitted my house entirely: but I had now done with the world, had lost in Amasis all I valued in it, and would not give the monster, whom I justly looked upon as the source of all my misfortunes, any more than I was compelled to do, his bare board and salary.

'Behold, by these memoirs, the beginning and progress of all my miseries! The end is near at hand; Death is already busy at my heart, and allows no time to apologize for the errors of my conduct. Pity is all my ashes can expect!

CHAP. VII.

CONTAINS A VERY BRIEF ACCOUNT
 OF SOME PASSAGES SUBSEQUENT
 TO THE FOREGOING STORY,
 WITH THE AUTHOR'S REMARKS
 UPON THE WHOLE.

AS I know very well that solidity has but a small share in the composition of the lady whom Alinda had intended to entrust with the publication of her memoirs, I thought the surest way of having the will of the deceased performed, was not to trouble a person of her character with the perusal of them, but to take the opportunity of my invisibilityship to present them to the world myself, which I accordingly have done.

And now, as I doubt not but the reader will be glad of being informed farther concerning Le Bris, I shall relate such particulars as have come to my knowledge.

It must be concluded, that this unworthy preceptor, in looking over the papers of Alinda, had either not observed, or afterwards forgot, that the ring he had just taken from among her other jewels, was the very same mentioned in her letter to her friend, otherwise he would certainly have had cunning enough to have replaced it where he found it.

Mr. ***** soon recollecting what his cousin had said to him in regard of this little legacy, and missing it from her other trinkets, made a strict enquiry what was become of it. Le Bris, having had her keys in his possession, was one of the first interrogated; and, on being so, boldly replied, that such a ring had been bestowed upon him by Alinda. 'How can that be,' cried the other; 'when, but three days before her death, she bequeathed it to a lady of her acquaintance, and insisted on my promise of delivering it to her?' — 'She must then be delirious,' said the parson; 'but, however that might be, Heaven forbid I should detain what is even suspected to be the right of another!' and, with these words, presented the ring to Mr. ***** who received it from him without the least ceremony.

This affair, notwithstanding the hypocritical manner in which the ring was returned,

returned, gave Mr. ***** room to imagine there had been some foul play in relation to Alinda's effects. The steward proved by his books, that he had paid into her hands, a week before her death, two hundred and fifty pounds in specie, and more than twice that sum in Bank bills, being arrears he had received from the tenants. It seemed unlikely to them that she could have disposed of the money, much less have had any occasion to change the bills in so short a time; orders were therefore sent to the Bank to stop the payment of such numbers till further notice: but the precaution came too late; the person who had secreted them had been already there, and converted all his paper into cash.

The heir, however, was confident that he had been defrauded: he consulted council upon it, who all advised him to have recourse to equity. Whether Le Bris had any hint given him of what was intended to be done against him, or whether his own guilty conscience made him only apprehend it, is uncertain: but he had not courage to stand the test of examination; he fled the kingdom; after having thrown aside that robe which, had he been known for what he truly was, would long before have been stripped from his sacrilegious shoulders.

But Providence would not permit him to enjoy his ill-got spoils, nor a life he had devoted to such wicked purposes. Designing to turn trader at Jamaica, he embarked for that place; but the vessel being overtaken by a storm, was lost almost in sight of shore; and he, with many other, perhaps less guilty persons, perished in the wreck. This last piece of intelligence I received from his mother; whom, though he had supported during the life of Alinda, to prevent being exposed by her clamours, he now left penniless, destitute, and starving, in an extreme old age.

Thus did the vengeance of Heaven at last overtake the wretch who, besides his other impieties, had been guilty of the most cruel ingratitude and breach of trust, in imposing upon the simplicity of a young creature com-

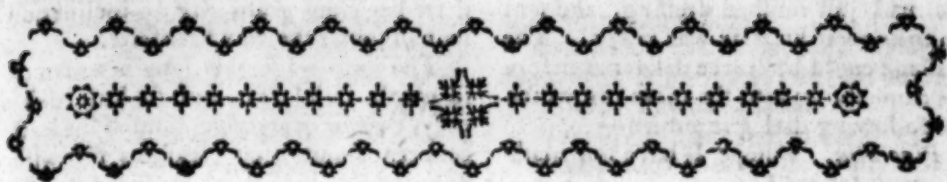
mitted to his care, and utterly destroying all the views of his generous patron and benefactor.

As for the unfortunate Alinda, though it is certain her conduct cannot be wholly justified, yet, according to my opinion, it ought not to be wholly condemned. It would be passing too severe a judgment, to impute the fondness she expressed for her wicked tutor to a wanton inclination. If we consider the various arts of her seducer, the commands laid on her by her father to love and obey him as himself, the manner in which she was brought up, the perfect ignorance she was kept in of the customs of the world, and how other young ladies behaved; we shall find that these are all of them very strong pleas in her defence, and not forbear pitying the mistakes of such artless innocence.

I wish as much could be alledged in her behalf on the score of her behaviour after breaking off with Amasis. The excesses into which she ran, in order to conceal the disquiets of her mind for the loss of that favourite lover, too evidently shew that she sacrificed two of the most valuable characteristics of womanhood, her prudence and her modesty, to one of the very worst—her pride.

Nor can I offer any thing in vindication of the last stages of her life. If convinced of her error in being perpetually amongst promiscuous company, it was flying to an almost as inexcusable extreme, to shut herself up from her best friends, and avoid the society of those whose conversation might have dissipated her chagrin, and, at the same time, improved her understanding. To do this, seems to me, I must confess, to have more the favour of despair, than of virtue or true fortitude.

There was, doubtless, a certain giddy propensity in her nature, which wanted to be corrected by reason, example, precept, authority, and the rudiments of a good education; all which she was denied: and it must therefore be acknowledged, that both her faults and misfortunes were entirely owing to the caprice and credulity of her father, and the base designs of the person appointed to be her governor and instructor.



THE
INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

THE AUTHOR, BY THE HELP OF HIS INVISIBILITY, HAS DISCOVERED SUCH A CONTRAST IN THE BEHAVIOUR OF TWO MARRIED COUPLE OF DISTINCTION, AS HE THINKS WOULD BE THE UTMOST INJUSTICE TO THE PUBLIC TO CONCEAL.



LACENTIA, after a long and passionate courtship, was at last wedded to Dalmatius. She brought him an ample fortune, a very agreeable person, and an unblemished character. She had studied the duties of a wife before she became so, and afterwards practised them in the strictest manner. Whenever she found him gay, she heightened his good-humour by her own sprightliness; and when sullen and perverse, as was too often the case, she endeavoured to dissipate his chagrin, either by playing on her spinnet, or telling him some diverting story. Without seeming to consult his palate, she always took care to put such dishes into her bill of fare as she had perceived he fed upon with most satisfaction. Whatever company suited his taste, were sure to be often invited by her, and entertained with the greatest marks of esteem and complaisance.

Her whole thoughts, indeed, were taken up with obliging and making him happy: she had no will, no inclination of her own; both were entirely regulated by his: and, to add to all this, she was an excellent œconomist, understood the management of a family perfectly well, and knew how to make a grand appearance with less expence than some others are at who are accounted contemptibly parsimonious.

What would some husbands give to be blessed with so virtuous, so tender, so endearing a companion! Dalmatius, instead of placing this jewel next his heart, hung it carelessly upon his sleeve; either not knowing, or not regarding, the true value of it.

During the course of several invisible visitations I made at their house, never did I see him treat her in any degree proportionable to her merit. When in his best humours, he returned the caresses she gave him only with a cold indifference; but when any thing abroad had happened to thwart his view, either of pleasure or ambition, no man could behave with more churlishness at home. But the manner in which this couple behaved to each other will best appear from their own words, which I shall give a short specimen of on two different occasions.

They were to go out together one day, to call on some friends who were to accompany them on a party of pleasure,

sure. The landau waited at the door. He had just finished dressing, and sent up to know if his wife was ready. The message could be scarce delivered before she came flying into the room, on which the following dialogue ensued—

Placentia. I hope I have not made you wait for me?

Dalmatius. Not at all. It wants some minutes of our appointment; but I know you women are generally so long equipping yourselves, that I was willing to hasten you.

Placentia. I should know but little of the value of time, if I wasted much of it in dressing. But pray, my dear, how do you like me to-day?

Dalmatius. Like you! that's an odd question. Why, as well as ever I did.

Placentia. I should be miserable if I did not think you did. But I mean, how do you like my cloaths? you see I am all in new.

Dalmatius. Are you indeed? I should have seen nothing of it, if you had not told me: I never mind what women have on.

Placentia. Then I am disappointed, my dear; for I assure you I consulted your fancy more than my own in the choice I made of this silk; as I have heard you say an hundred times, I believe, that you thought blue and silver the most agreeable mixture that could be.

Dalmatius. So it is; but it may not happen to become every body: however, I must do you the justice to say, you look well enough in it, and I believe every body will think so.

Placentia. If you think so, my dear, it is all I wish.

In speaking this, she took hold of his hand, and kissed it with the greatest warmth of affection. He returned the favour with a slight salute upon her cheek; then looking on his watch, said he believed it was time to go, and went down stairs, the following.

The truth of the affair is this. *Dalmatius* is not only vain and insolent in his nature, but also amorous and inconstant to an excess. Though he no longer had any eyes for the charms of his fair wife, his heart was but too susceptible to those of other women. *Miranda* for some time engrossed all his devoirs; nor could her being married to the most intimate of his friends restrain him from making his unlawful addresses to her;

nor the vow she had taken at the altar, deter her from gratifying an inclination he had found the way to inspire.

The husband of this lady is a man of so much indolence, and so little delicacy, that he never gives himself the least concern about what pleasures his wife may indulge herself in, provided she offers no interruption to those he takes himself. There are some, indeed, who say, that on their marriage they mutually agreed to allow each other a perfect latitude in this point; but, be that as it may, *Miranda* seems under no apprehensions of her conduct being called in question by him.

Her amour with *Dalmatius* soon became so notorious, that it was in the mouth of every one. *Placentia* herself was the last that gave credit to it; that excellent lady would not suffer her heart to entertain ill thoughts of the man she was bound to love, nor could any thing but the testimony of her own eyes have convinced her of the guilty truth.

Miranda came to visit her one day when she happened to be abroad; but *Dalmatius* being at home, the presence of his wife was little wanted. She soon returned, however; and being told that *Miranda* was above, ran hastily up to receive her; but not finding her in the room where company were usually introduced, yet thinking she heard the murmur of voices very near, she stepped towards the place whence it seemed to proceed, and peeping through the key-hole of an adjacent chamber, saw her husband and the lady in a posture such as could leave her no doubt of their criminal conversation.

The sudden shock at first transfixed her feet; but presently recovering herself, she retired from the guilty scene, and went into her own chamber; where finding her woman at work, she ordered her to go immediately down, and forbid the servants to take any notice of her being come home. 'I hear,' said she, 'that *Miranda* is below, and I am not very well, and would not see any company at this time.'

The woman being withdrawn, to do as she was commanded, *Placentia* threw herself into an easy chair, and fell into a profound reverie. I was present all this while, but my Belt of Invisibility did not enable me to penetrate into her thoughts; till seeming as if determined on something she had been debating within

within herself, she rose suddenly from her seat, and burst into these words—'No, he shall never know I think him false, much less that I have detected him. Reproaches would avail me nothing, and might harden him in his crime. I am his wife; we must always live together, or be subject to the ridicule of a laughing and censorious world. Prudence, therefore, as well as duty, commands me to conceal the shameful discovery I have made; and rather endeavour, by added tenderness, if possible, to reclaim him, and oblige him to see I am at least as worthy of his affection as Miranda.'

I left her in this resolution, and found that for several days she strictly adhered to it; excepting only, that she could not so far dissemble her uneasiness as to be able to receive Miranda in the manner she had formerly done: she therefore desisted from making her any farther invitations to her house, and always excused herself from accepting any sent to her by that lady.

This was enough, however, to give the lovers some apprehensions that she suspected their intrigue; but Miranda was of too vain and gay a temper to feel any inquietude on this score; and the ungrateful Dalmatius, finding himself treated by his wife with the same love and complaisance as ever, gave himself not the trouble either to examine, or be under the least concern, whether such a behaviour proceeded from her ignorance of his fault, or her discretion in overlooking it.

But the sweetest disposition may be embittered by continual provocations. Placentia, finding that all the efforts she made for regaining the affections of her husband were ineffectual, began by degrees to grow more remiss in her cares of pleasing; not that she ever departed from the essential duties of a wife, she only ceased the practice of those which, as the case stood between them, might justly be called works of supererogation.

Being to have a great rout at her house, just as she was going to send cards to invite the company, Dalmatius came into the room; and having looked over the catalogue of names, on finding Miranda's not there, began with an unusual haughtiness to interrogate her on that occasion; and she now, for the first time, replied to what he said with as

much indifference as she had formerly done with submission.

Dalmatius. How happens it, Madam, that Miranda is left out among the number of your guests?

Placentia. I had forgot her.

Dalmatius. It is well, then, that I reminded you: but methinks a lady of her rank and character in the world might well have deserved a place in your remembrance.

Placentia. It may be so; but one cannot invite every body.

Dalmatius. When any body is invited to our house, especially on these occasions, it would be the utmost absurdity to leave Miranda out; therefore I insist upon her coming, for your own sake.

Placentia. Oh, Sir, you need not give yourself any trouble on that score; I am certainly a judge how to behave to my own acquaintance: but if you are so desirous of having Miranda here to-morrow, the best way is for you to send a card as from yourself; I doubt not but the invitation will be full as agreeable, and as readily complied with.

Dalmatius. You talk in an odd manner, Madam! And, now I think on it, I met Miranda the other day in the Park, and she complained to me of a strange change in you towards her; that you have never returned the last visit she made you; have scarce spoke to her in any publick assembly, and seemed to shun her presence as much as possible. Pray what is the meaning of all this?

Placentia. That, Sir, is a question which perhaps neither you nor she would thank me for answering directly.

Dalmatius. I understand you, Madam, however. You have got notions in your head not becoming in you to indulge, nor worthy any endeavours of mine to expel. I would only have you be wiser; and consider, that of all domestick animals a jealous wife is the most contemptible.

He flung out of the room with these words, and all the tokens of disdain and indignation in his countenance; leaving Placentia in a confusion not easy to be described. I could perceive, however, by the gestures of that unhappy lady, that she repented having gone so far; yet knowing herself the only injured, could not yield either to recede from her resolution on the account of Miranda, or make use of any attempts to soften

so ill-founded a resentment in her husband.

It is now said that his amour with Miranda is on the decline; that a new face has utterly eclipsed all the charms he lately found in hers; and that Placentia has at least this consolation under her misfortune, to find that no one beauty has the power long to retain the heart she has lost: so just are the poet's words—

- ‘ When fix’d to one, love safe at anchor
‘ rides,
‘ And dares the fury of the winds and
‘ tides;
‘ But losing once that hold, to the wide
‘ ocean borne,
‘ It drives at will, to ev’ry wave a scorn.’

Marriage, though a sacred institution, though ordained by Heaven to bestow the supremest felicity we mortals are capable of enjoying, becomes the severest curse, when souls ill suited to each other are joined in it's indissoluble bonds; and it too often happens, that those who by nature and education are qualified to give and receive the greatest happiness, are rendered the most miserable, through the perverseness of a bad-tempered partner.

Montelion has been twice married. He has experienced both all the contentments, and all the inquietudes, of that state, with women of humours as widely different as light and darkness; I had almost said, as heaven from hell. His first lady, as she was excelled by none in exterior perfections, so she was equalled but by very few in the more valuable endowments of the mind. His life, while in possession of this treasure, was one continued scene of harmony and love. But soon, alas! the blissful prospect vanished; the fair, the virtuous, the tender Erminia, died! and, to add to the misfortune of her disconsolate husband, left no pledge behind her of their mutual affection.

Though in that season of life when amorous flames are at their highest bent, those of Montelion seemed all buried in the grave of his dear Erminia. He remained for several years the lonely occupier of a widowed bed. At last, however, the ardent desire of having an heir for his estate got somewhat the better of his melancholy, and determined him on a second venture.

In the choice he made, he consulted neither fortune nor beauty: the one, indeed, he wanted not; and as for the other, since his Erminia's death all women were equal to him, and he regarded the lovely and unlovely with the same indifference. He therefore married Ferocia, merely because she was one of the daughters of a fruitful family, and likely to answer the only end which induced him once more to become a husband.

Every body was astonished at these nuptials, and much more so on the knowledge of Ferocia's behaviour afterwards. But I shall present my reader with the character of this lady, as it was given by an impartial hand in a letter to a friend.

‘ Ferocia, now the wife of Montelion, is a woman plain in her person, weak in her understanding, capricious and fantastick in her humour, unpolished in her manners; and, what is worse than all, insufferably vain and insolent on her new dignity, without one grain of true love or gratitude for the man who has raised her to it.’

My gift of invisibility assisted me in proving the truth of the above in all it's parts. Farther I will not pretend to say; for though it is a vulgar adage, that ‘ Where there is no modesty there is little sign of honesty,’ and I have heard severe censures passed upon her virtue, yet I never could make any discoveries to her prejudice on that score; and am apt to believe, that the rampant airs she gives herself among the men, are in reality, more owing to a hoidenly than an amorous disposition.

Montelion seems to see her behaviour in the same light I do; yet, for the sake of his own honour, cannot but wish she would act with more reserve. They had not been married above three months, when he was seized with a fit of the gout, which confined him to his apartment. Ferocia came in, covered over with jewels, and blazing like a star; and, without expressing any concern for his indisposition, told him that she was going to Lady Primwell's route; on which ensued the following dialogue between them—

Montelion. I flattered myself, Madam, with having the happiness of your company at home this evening, as I am not in a condition to stir out.

Ferocia. Oh heavens! I should make the

the worst nurse in the world! What good would my staying do you?

Montelion. A great deal, Madam; and I hope I need say no more to engage you not to leave me.

Ferocia. Indeed, my lord, I must go; I have given my promise.

Montelion. You will be easily excused. Nobody will expect a wife on a party of pleasure, when they know her husband is confined by pain. Come, my dear, you must not think that staying at home one night is an act of too much complaisance to a man who would refuse nothing for your satisfaction.

In speaking this, he drew her gently towards him, and gave her two or three very tender kisses; but, in doing so, a little snuff he had between his thumb and finger happened to scatter on her glove; on which she started from him, and returned his kind expressions in these terms—

Ferocia. Pish! How silly this is! You have spoiled my gloves with your nasty snuff. Here, John! William! run one of you to my dressing-room, and bid Faddle bring me a pair of gloves in a minute.

Montelion. Don't put yourself into a passion, my dear; but sit down, and resolve to oblige me. I'll call for cards, and we'll have a game at picquet.

She made no reply; but hung down her head, and stood counting the sticks of her fan till Faddle came into the room.

Ferocia. Where are the gloves?

Faddle. Madam, I thought the fellow was mistaken, when he bid me bring gloves; as your ladyship had just now a clean pair.

Montelion. Aye, Mrs. Faddle, there is no occasion. Rather get your lady's night-dress ready; for she has changed her mind, and does not go abroad.

Ferocia. Indeed I both must and will, my lord. Do you imagine, that because you are sick, I must mortify myself, and be mewed up with you till I am sick too? No, no; I am not weak enough to comply with so unreasonable a request; therefore adieu. I shall scarce see you till late; and hope then to find your lordship better.

She waited not for any reply he might have made, but flounced out of the room, followed by her woman. Montelion soon after heard the footman called to

attend her ladyship, and the chariot drive from the door. How would some husbands have resented such usage! yet Montelion bore it, without any shew of impatience, from one endowed with no charms to excite either love or respect. His tameness, however, is not owing to any meanness of spirit in him, but rather to his good sense. He does not care to have his domestick affairs become the talk of the town, nor to come to an open rupture with the woman he has made his wife; and having in vain essayed all the means that prudence and good-nature could suggest to bring her to a more reasonable way of thinking, he has at last given over the attempt; seems not to regard whatever she does, but endeavours to lose the thoughts of his private disquiets in the toils of publick business.

CHAP. II.

RELATES A STRANGE INSTANCE OF
BIGOTRY AND ENTHUSIASM IN
A PARENT.

NOTHING is so desirable as religion, nothing so truly amiable as piety. What blessings does it not diffuse to all who are within the reach of it's influence? From it all other virtues are derived, and by it alone we are enabled to act with vigour. Yet how often have we seen this heavenly quality perverted into it's very opposite; and, from the spirit of meekness, benevolence, mercy, charity, and universal love, become the spirit of pride, contention, envy, hatred, and persecution! Like the archangel, who standing nearest to the throne of glory, precipitated himself into the lowest hell.

Bigotry and superstition are the surest engines which the subtle enemy of mankind makes use of for our destruction. All other crimes carry their stings with them; conscience reproaches us for doing amiss, and we fall not again into the like without extreme remorse and shame: but the man possessed of this holy frenzy of the mind glories in his perseverance, because he looks upon it as the highest virtue.

A gentleman, whom I shall distinguish by the name of Flaminio, had attained to the age of fifty, without having been known to be guilty of any one

thing which could call in question either his honour, good-nature, or good sense. He had lived caressed by his friends, respected by his acquaintance, and almost adored by his tenants and dependants. He had one son, and one daughter; and having lost his wife in bringing the latter into the world, he never ventured on a second, but laid out all his cares on the education of these two.

Adario, for so I shall call the son, having finished his studies to the satisfaction of all those who had the charge of instructing him, in order to compleat the fine gentleman, was sent to make the tour of Europe, under the care of a discreet and experienced governor. Isabinda, the daughter, remained at home with her father; and being extremely beautiful, and mistress of every accomplishment befitting her sex and rank, attracted the love and admiration of as many as had opportunity to be witness of her perfections.

Being such as I have described, it may easily be supposed that, in a town like this, there were not few who declared themselves her lovers. Lysimor was among the number of those who had the least to fear, and the most to hope for, in his addresses to her. He had an agreeable person, was descended of a good family, and was heir to an estate adequate to his birth. He had been fellow-student with Adario; and though, being some years older, he had left the university before him, they had always kept up a correspondence. He was introduced to the acquaintance of the sister by the intimacy he had with the brother; who failed not, before he went abroad, to recommend his friend's pretensions to her in the strongest terms.

He it was, indeed, who alone had the power of pleasing her. Her young heart presently distinguished him from all his rivals; but her modesty and discretion would not permit her to give him any marks of a peculiar regard, till authorized to do so by the person she had always been taught to consider as the sole disposer of her fate.

Lysimor, who had also been bred in the most strict obedience, made not his court to Isabinda without having first communicated the passion he had for her to his father, and received his approbation. The two old gentlemen had afterwards an interview on this occasion; and Flaminio, being perfectly satisfied

with the proposals made by the other, readily gave his consent, on condition his daughter, whose inclinations he said he would never go about to force, should have no objection to the match.

The same evening, as they were sitting together at supper, Flaminio related to his daughter all that had passed between him and the father of Lysimor; and added, that he looked upon him as a very deserving young fellow; that his birth and fortune were unexceptionable; and that, if she had no aversion to his person, he should be heartily glad of an alliance with him.

Isabinda blushed like the sun just peeping from a cloud, on hearing her father speak in this manner; and could scarce recover herself from the glad surprise enough to tell him that, since he was pleased with such a union, she should be all obedience to his will. She said no more; but the soft confusion she was in, and the joy which she could not restrain from sparkling in her eyes, sufficiently testified how much her inclinations corresponded with her duty. 'Well, then,' resumed he, 'from this time forward receive Lysimor as the person by Heaven and me ordained to be your husband.'

I leave it to my fair readers to conceive what delightful images must fill the mind of Isabinda, after this sanction to an affection which hitherto she had not dared to indulge, yet had it not in her power to subdue. For my own part, though I was present during all the conversation she had with her father on this head, I left the house when she retired to her chamber; which she did more early than ordinary that night; I guess, to have an opportunity of giving a loose to the transports of her mind.

As for Lysimor, the joy he felt on being acquainted with what his father had done for him, was very much allayed by the perfect ignorance he was in of having made any impression on the heart of his charming mistress. He went to visit her the next day, hoping, yet trembling, for the event: but soon the lovely maid put an end to his suspense, by assuring him, that for his sake alone she could resolve, without reluctance, on changing her condition.

Not only the lovers themselves, but both their parents also, seemed equally impatient for the consummation of these nuptials. A short day was appointed for

for the celebration; the articles of settlement and jointure were drawing up; new habits, new coaches, new equipages, all necessary preparations were carrying on with the utmost expedition: when, lo! a sudden and unexpected storm bore down at once the pleasing prospect of their hopes; for ever dashed their expected joys, and spread a lasting scene of desolation and despair! How vainly, alas! do we depend on mortal happiness! The gaudy bubble fleets before us like the wind, eludes our grasp, and mocks the idle chase, as Sir Robert Howard justly expresses it—

- ‘ Short is th’ uncertain reign and pomp of
‘ mortal pride.
‘ New turns and changes ev’ry day
‘ Are of inconstant Chance the constant
‘ arts.
‘ Soon she gives, soon takes away:
‘ She comes, embraces, nauseates you, and
‘ parts.’

Flaminio, from being the most cheerful, good-natured man, that could be of his age, became all at once transformed into the most sullen, gloomy, and discontented. From expressing the utmost eagerness for his daughter’s wedding, he now appeared wholly negligent of every thing relating to it. When the father of Lysimor, and the lawyer employed to draw the marriage-writings, went to his house, he ordered his servants to say he was from home; made several tradesmen carry back the things he had bespoke for the solemnity; and, in fine, put an entire stop to all he had been so solicitous in forwarding.

The father of Lysimor began to think himself affronted by this proceeding, and both the lovers were amazed and troubled beyond description at it: but though the young gentleman came once or twice every day to visit his dear mistress, Flaminio so carefully avoided his presence, that he could get no opportunity of complaining to him; and Isabinda was too much terrified by the unusual austerity of his looks, to have the courage to open her lips to him on this score.

She was one afternoon alone in the fore-parlour, waiting the approach of Lysimor; when her father, who was in a back room, called her to him. She immediately obeyed; and, on her en-

trance, was accosted by him in this manner—

Flaminio. Well, Isabinda, I suppose you expect Lysimor here presently?

Isabinda. Yes, Sir. It is near the hour when he generally visits me.

Flaminio. His company may be spared at this time. I have something to say to you, and would not be interrupted. I have therefore given orders to the servants to tell him, when he comes, that you are gone abroad.

Isabinda. He will scarce believe that, because I promised to take a walk with him in the Mall after tea; but if you require my attendance, I will dismiss him the moment he comes.

Flaminio. No, it shall be as I have said. If you marry him, you will have opportunities enough to see each other; and if you do not, it will be best for you not to have settled your affections upon him.

Isabinda. Sir, I should never have entertained the least thoughts of marrying either him or any other man, without having first received your commands to do so.

Flaminio. However that may be, events we think most near are often the farthest from being accomplished; and, for that reason, a young maid ought never to dispose of her heart till it is accompanied by her hand.

Isabinda. I hope, Sir, that Lysimor has done nothing to forfeit the goodwill you once had for him.

Flaminio. No, no; I have nothing to say against the young gentleman: and should still approve of him for a son-in-law, but—

Isabinda. But what! I beseech you, Sir, keep me not on a rack more cruel than death!

Flaminio. I am sorry to see you so much concerned on his account; I hoped to have found you more indifferent: but, since your inclinations are so deeply engaged, with from my soul there was a possibility for your union.

Isabinda. Ah, Sir, what prevents it!

Flaminio. A father’s everlasting happiness or misery.

These words, the emphasis with which he uttered them, and the horror that appeared in his countenance, frightened the poor young lady almost into fits. She started, trembled; and, not able to comprehend the meaning of what she heard, the

the most terrible ideas came into her mind; which made her rather dread than wish an explanation.

She stood pale as a ghost, and motionless as a statue; while her father, greatly agitated, walked backwards and forwards in the room with irregular and disordered steps. Both remained speechless for some time. At last—'I cannot as yet,' said he, 'bring myself to relieve the suspense I see you in; but I will do it soon. Retire, therefore, my dear Isabinda, to your chamber,' continued he, with a deep sigh; 'and invoke the Almighty Dispenser of blessings to give you that composure of mind, which can alone enable you to support cheerfully whatever fate he is pleased to ordain for you.'

She went to her chamber, as commanded; but whether to pray or weep, I will not pretend to inform my readers. I remained with Flaminio while he staid below, which was not long; then followed him up to his closet, where he shut himself in, plucking the door so hastily after him, I had not time to enter; but peeping through the key hole, I saw he had thrown himself prostrate on the floor, with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, seeming very earnest in devotion. I left him in this posture, and returned home, much surprized at what I had seen and heard.

Impatient, however, to get some farther light into an affair which at present appeared so mysterious to me, I went the next morning to Flaminio's house. I entered Isabinda's chamber with a servant who was carrying in a dish of chocolate. That unhappy lady was sitting leaning her elbow on a table, and her head upon her hand; her eyes red with the late-fallen tears, and all symptoms of despair and grief about her. But nothing being to be learnt here, I went in search of Flaminio, whom I found in his dressing room. He was in a musing posture, but had a countenance much more serene than the day before. I had not been many minutes with him, before he rung his bell for a footman, whom he ordered to fetch Isabinda to him. She presently came; and I was witness of the following extraordinary dialogue—

Flaminio. Sit down, my child. I was to blame to leave you in the perplexity I did last night, but it was occasioned only by my too great tender-

ness. I could not easily resolve to tell you a thing which I feared would make you wish I had loved you less.

Isabinda. Sir, I have always looked upon your paternal affection to me as the greatest blessing of my life.

Flaminio. I believe you have; and I had never any cause to think you did not return that affection with an adequate proportion of filial love and duty.

Isabinda. I flatter myself, Sir, that no one of my actions has ever shewn the contrary.

Flaminio. None, indeed, my dearest child. I ought not, therefore, to have doubted of your ready compliance in a thing on which my soul's eternal peace depends. Tell me, my Isabinda, would you not willingly forego a trifling satisfaction to ensure your father's happiness both here and hereafter?

Isabinda. I should else, Sir, be unworthy of the goodness you have shewn me.

Flaminio. Well, then, my dearest Isabinda, I will no longer hesitate to make thee the confidante of a secret which hitherto has never escaped my own bosom. It is a story will very much surprize thee: but see thou mark me well, and be attentive to every particular.

Isabinda. You may be certain, Sir, I will be so.

Flaminio. Know, then, that going into the country to take possession of that estate which you have heard devolved on me by the death of my uncle, I fell into the acquaintance of a young lady in the neighbourhood, called Harriot. She was handsome. I had a heart entirely free; and I became, as I then thought, violently in love with her. But marriage being a thing of too serious a nature to be agreeable to my inclinations at that time, the addresses I made to her were extremely private. Such as they were, however, they succeeded but too well; and, on my promising to make her my wife, obtained all the gratification my passion could require.

Having finished the business which had brought me thither, I set out soon after on my return to London. Harriot took leave of me without much regret; being to follow in a few days with her father and the whole family, the winter season coming on. On her arrival, she sent me immediate notice; and I provided a proper

proper place for our private interviews, which were not seldom, my amorous desires being yet unsatiated.

Perhaps her youth, beauty, and the extreme tenderness she had for me, might have engaged me for a much longer time, had not the charms of your dear mother rendered all those of the whole sex besides contemptible in my eyes. I adored her from the first moment I beheld her. The flame she inspired me with was widely different from what I had ever felt before: marriage was no more a bugbear to me; on the contrary, I languished to be linked in those bonds with a person of such distinguished merit, and the means of attaining that felicity engrossed all my thoughts.

I now made a thousand excuses to avoid meeting poor Harriot; and when her repeated solicitations drew me sometimes to her, my behaviour was so cool, so changed from what it was, that she could not but see into the cause; she grew jealous, inquisitive, and soon discovered my honourable attachment.

Tears, reproaches, and complaints, now furnished me with a pretence to quarrel. I told her I would see her no more: and indeed she put it out of my power to break my word; for in three days after we had parted in this manner, she died; not without some suspicion of poison, as I have heard it whispered: but whether she had recourse, in reality, to any such desperate method to rid her of a life she was grown weary of, or whether grief alone did the work of fate, I know not; but am too certain, however that might be, my ingratitude was the cruel cause, though she was too generous ever to declare it; and not one of all her numerous kindred or acquaintance had the least intimation of the intercourse between us.

The shock I felt on the first intelligence of this sad catastrophe is inconceivable, and would doubtless have made a lasting impression on me, if the progress I every day made in my courtship to the object of my virtuous affection, the gaining her consent to be mine, our marriage, and the hurry of pleasures attending that solemnity, had not too much taken up my heart to leave room for any other sensations than those of joy and transport.

Events once obliterated from the mind by others of greater consequence to our happiness, seldom or never recur

to it again. A long succession of years passed over without any remembrance of the unfortunate Harriot; and it is but very lately that the thoughts of her have begun to trouble my repose.

But Heaven would not suffer me to be always dead to a just sensibility of the crime I had been guilty of. Not many nights ago—whether sleeping or awake I cannot pretend to be positive—I saw, at least I thought I saw, that injured woman stand by my bed-side: I heard her, too, with a voice hollow, yet sonorous as an echo, bid me repent, and atone for my past transgression. ‘How shall I atone?’ cried I. ‘Devote to Heaven the dearest thing you have on earth,’ replied the phantom, and in that instant vanished from my sight.

It is not possible for me to express, much less for you to conceive, the horrors I sustained after this amazing dream or apparition, I know not which to call it: but am since convinced it was no other than my guardian angel, who, under the form of Harriot, instructed me how to atone for my crime; and should I neglect or disobey his admonition, it would more than double my transgression, and sink my soul down to the lowest hell. ‘Devote to Heaven the dearest thing thou hast on earth,’ the vision said. Now what have I on earth that is truly dear to me except your brother and yourself? I have examined well my heart, and find that of the two you sit nearest there: it is you, therefore, my Isabinda, that is ordained to be the sacrifice; and, like faithful Abraham, I must submit to lay my darling on the altar.

Isabinda. Oh, Sir, you will not kill me!

Flaminio. Kill thee, my child! rather would I suffer this flesh of mine to be torn with burning pincers, every limb dislocated, my breast laid open, and my panting heart exposed to publick view, than hurt the smallest part of thy dear precious frame! No, I mean to present thee a living sacrifice on the altar of piety; to consecrate thee to the service of Heaven; and to make thee, while on earth, a companion for the saints above. In fine, my Isabinda, you must be a nun.

Isabinda. A nun! Oh heavens!

This poor young lady seemed no less terrified with the word Nun than she had been with that of Sacrifice: but all I can say is, not all the obedience Isabinda had hitherto been practised in, nor all

all her father's authority, nor the arguments he urged, could either reconcile her to the way of life he enjoined, or oblige her to submit to it with any degree of willingness; and her tears and entreaties being equally in vain to make him recede from the resolution he had taken, he dismissed her from his presence; telling her, in a very angry tone, that he had now done with persuasions, and should take measures to bring her to her duty more becoming his character as a father.

CHAP. III.

THE AUTHOR FINDS HIMSELF, THOUGH WITH AN INFINITE DEAL OF DIFFICULTY, OBLIGED TO MAKE A DISCOVERY OF SOME PART OF THE UNHAPPY CONSEQUENCES WHICH IMMEDIATELY ATTENDED THE CRUEL RESOLUTION FLAMINIO HAD TAKEN IN REGARD TO HIS DAUGHTER.

I Had never yet attempted to see how Lyfemor brooked the late delays that had been given to his intended nuptials, so now took it into my head to go. A servant, who was carrying out a wig-box, gave me an opportunity of slipping into the house. I found the old gentleman with a letter in his hand, which seemed to excite in him very great emotions; but as he had just finished the perusal as I entered the room, and was putting it into his pocket, I could not possibly know any thing of the contents. I was not, however, long unsatisfied. Lyfemor was returned from a morning walk he had been taking, and entered a few moments after. He appeared in little better humour than his father; and, when he had paid the usual salutation, spoke in this manner—

Lyfemor. Certainly, Sir, something very extraordinary must have happened to occasion this sudden change both in Flaminio and his daughter. I have been to enquire of her health this morning, after being disappointed of seeing her last night, and have a second time been denied access.

Father. I could have told you that, if I had known you had been there. I have just received a letter from Flaminio. See what the old coxcomb writes.

With these words he drew the letter

he had been reading from his pocket, and threw it on a table. Lyfemor snatched it up with the greatest eagerness, and found the contents as follow—

‘SIR,
‘AN over-ruling fate deprives me of the honour of your alliance, and disposes of my daughter in a different manner from what I once intended. I must therefore intreat your son will make no future visits at my house, nor take any steps to traverse those designs which I am obliged to pursue in relation to Isabinda. As for yourself, Sir, I hope you’ll impute this alteration in my conduct to what it really is, an unavoidable necessity; and not to want of respect in him, who in all things he would readily subscribe himself, Sir, your most obedient servant,

‘FLAMINIO.’

Surprise and resentment now seemed to strive which should be most predominant in the countenance of Lyfemor. He stamped, bit his lips, paused a while, then spoke.

Lyfemor. This must be madness. No man in his senses could possibly act thus. What! after expressing the highest satisfaction in the intended union between our families, after the warmest professions of respect to you, Sir, and of love to me, to affront both in so gross a manner, without the least cause given on our part; ’tis unaccountable, ’tis monstrous! But I cannot think Isabinda shares in her father’s phrenzy.

Father. Whatever she does, it behoves you not to think of her at all. Sooner would I have my family extinct, and my name perish to eternity, than have a branch of that stem grafted on a tree of mine; and I should be sorry to find you mean-spirited enough to retain a wish that way.

What reply Lyfemor would have made I know not, for the old gentleman was called hastily out of the parlour to one who waited for him in another room. Lyfemor, when alone, fell into a deep musing, in which he sighed and frowned alternately, and seemed divided between love and resentment. But whatever his thoughts were, he had no opportunity of indulging them. A servant presented him with a letter, which he said was brought

brought by a porter, who desired it might be given into his own hands, and waited for an answer. Lysimor no sooner saw the characters on the superscription, than the late paleness in his cheeks was converted into the most lively red. He broke the seal with trembling impatience, and found it contained these lines—

‘DEAR SIR,

‘MY father, in an unaccountable caprice, tears me from your arms, and is resolute to make me a nun, or rather a martyr of me. Prayers and tears are ineffectual to move him from his purpose; I have tried both in vain; and it is by flight alone I can avoid a fate more dreadful to me than all I can suffer by abandoning his protection. If you have compassion, I must not now say love, assist me in my escape. I have made no intimacies, have no confidants on whom I dare rely in this distracting exigence, and there remain not four and twenty hours between me and the impossibility of averting the doom that threatens me. I am at present a close prisoner in my chamber; and to-morrow, early in the morning, am to take coach for Dover, thence to embark for Dunkirk, under the care of a person whose vigilance I cannot hope to elude, and who is not to quit my sight one moment, till I am, beyond redemption, lodged within the walls of a convent. A girl lately taken into the house, pitying my distress, has promised to get this conveyed to you, and also to grease the hinges of the street-door, that I may go out with less noise when the family are all in bed, which I believe will be pretty early, as my father is too much out of humour to see any company. If you will take upon you the trouble to wait for me at the end of our street, next the square, between the hours of twelve and one, and conduct me to some place where I may be secreted till the search which doubtless will be made after me is over, I shall endeavour to earn a subsistence by such ways as I am capable of, and fortune shall present. If you ever truly loved me, you will not think this request too presuming, but rather be sorry for the sad accident that compels me to make it. I beg a line, in answer to this, may in-

form me what I have to depend upon from your good-nature, and what hope remains for the forlorn and most wretched

‘ISABINDA.’

The lover appeared extremely touched with this melancholy epistle; and when he had finished, threw his arms across his breast, and cried out—‘Poor Isabinda! What demon has taken possession of her father’s brain!—But I should be even yet more cruel to refuse the assistance she implores. No, love, honour, and generosity, forbid it! Whatever shall be the consequence, I must, I will defend her from the fate she dreads.’ He then called his footman, and bid him order the person who brought this letter to wait for an answer at some distance from the house, lest his father should happen to see him, and be inquisitive from whom, and on what business he came. Having given these instructions, he ran hastily into his chamber, where I followed, and saw him sit down to his bureau, and write in these terms—

‘TO ISABINDA:

‘MY FOR EVER DEAR ISABINDA,
‘WHATEVER are my sufferings in this unexpected turn of our affairs, I cannot be wholly unhappy while I know you have had no part in the inflicting them. Why do you unkindly make that a request, which you ought to be convinced you might command from my affection? I have devoted myself entirely to your service; and no change of circumstances can ever make me withdraw a heart attracted by so much beauty, and confirmed in it’s choice by so much merit. Yes, my charming Isabinda, I am unalterably yours; and you may depend upon my love and honour for every thing you either do, or shall hereafter stand in need of. I shall employ this day in procuring a proper place for your reception; and shall anticipate the hours you mention to watch for your enlargement, which I pray Heaven to facilitate, and bring you safe to the arms of, my dear Isabinda, your faithful and most constant

‘LYSIMOR.’

He had but just dispatched this, when his father came into the room; and, with a voice and air vastly different from what he had a few minutes before assumed, spoke to him in these terms—

Father. I believe, son, I have interrupted your dressing: but no matter; I bring you news to console you for the loss of your late mistress. My old friend, Mr. Countwell, the banker, has been with me. His fair charge, Emilia, comes to town next week; and he has offered, for a small premium, to make up a match between you. He assures me she is a most lovely young creature, is entirely independent of any one, and has twenty thousand pounds in her pocket, which is more than double the fortune you would have had with the daughter of that fool Flaminio.

Lyfemor. I am greatly indebted to your goodness, Sir, and to the consideration Mr. Countwell has of me; but, Sir, you know I have long loved Isabinda, and you must give my heart some time to wean itself from its former attachment.

Father. Phaw! one woman, like one nail, will drive out the thoughts of another. Your heart must be strangely stupified, if it does not dance to the music of twenty thousand pounds. Remember, son, the estate you are to enjoy at my decease does not amount to quite sixteen hundred pounds per annum; and that I have been obliged to mortgage some part of it, to discharge the debts your extravagant elder brother contracted before he died. Emilia's fortune will retrieve all. Well, the breaking off your match with Isabinda is the most lucky thing that could have happened.

Lyfemor. But, Sir, we cannot be sure the young lady will approve my suit.

Father. Mr. Countwell will manage that. He is a shrewd man, he knows what he does, and will undertake nothing without performing it. You have only to say a few fine things to Emilia, which you know well enough how to do, when once you get Isabinda out of your head.

Lyfemor. Sir, I shall use my best endeavours to obey you in every thing.

Father. That is well said. I want no obedience but what is for your own interest, and will leave you to reflect how many charms there are in twenty thousand pounds, and then you will fall in

love with the fortune, whether ever you do so with the lady or not.

This conversation being ended, I recollected that I had some affairs of my own to dispatch, and began to think of retiring, but was prevented by Lyfemor; who walking in a continued and very hasty motion about the room, obliged me to keep close in the corner where I had placed myself, and not venture to stir, lest he should rush against me. At first I was a little vexed at this confinement, but afterwards rejoiced heartily at it, as it gave me an opportunity of making a discovery, which otherwise, perhaps, I should have found much more difficult to attain.

Lyfemor, after ruminating for a considerable time, rung the bell for his footman; who, on his entrance, received for his first command to shut the door: that done, he made no scruple to inform the fellow, who I soon found was in all his secrets, of the concern he was in for Isabinda; the promise he had given of taking her under his protection; and the vexation he was in to find a proper lodging for her, so that his father might not suspect he had any hand in her escape, nor her own be able to discover where she was concealed.

To this the man, after a pretty long pause, replied, that he had a sister who was a widow, and lived in a very remote and obscure part of the town; that her house was clean, though small; that her family consisted only of herself, an infant sucking at her breast, and a country girl who did the business of a servant: and added, that if the lady could content herself with so mean an abode, he was certain she might remain there concealed as long as she should think fit.

Lyfemor seemed overjoyed at this proposal, and bid him go directly to his sister, apprise her of the affair as far as it was necessary, and give her a strict charge to prepare every thing in as decent a manner as she could for the reception of her fair guest. The fellow went to execute his commission, and I slid softly round the room till I got to the door, and followed him, but not to the place where he was going; for having already found, by the discourse he had with his master, the name and situation of the street, I had no business to take so long a walk, till something more material excited my curiosity.

Lyfemor himself, however, was not
more

more punctual to the time appointed by Isabinda, than I was to know the issue of this adventure. It wanted some minutes of twelve when I arrived at the corner of the square, and had but just posted myself under a lamp, when I saw Lysimor come muffled up in his cloak, and attended by his servant. We had not waited above a quarter of an hour, before we saw Isabinda steal out of her father's house, with a bundle under her arm almost as big as herself. Lysimor, perceiving how she was loaded, made his man hasten to ease her of it; after which she rather flew than ran into the arms of her deliverer, for so she called him; adding—'Oh, can you pardon the trouble I have given you!' To which he replied—'Call not that a trouble which I shall always look upon as the greatest happiness of my life.' I could hear distinctly little more of what they said to each other, the footman being between us. They walked very fast through the square, and down a street which turned from it, where a hackney-coach waited to receive them; and, as soon as they were entered, drove away with all imaginable speed. I had neither the will nor the power to pursue them, so returned home, to reflect at leisure on the passages I had been witness of.

CHAP. IV.

CONTAINS SOME MORE INTERESTING PARTICULARS OF THIS ADVENTURE; AND SHEWS THAT PEOPLE, BY FLYING FROM ONE THING WHICH THEY THINK WOULD BE A MISFORTUNE, OFTEN RUN INTO OTHERS OF A NATURE MORE TO BE DREADED.

MUCH as I had condemned Flaminio for his bigotted superstition, I could not wholly absolve Isabinda for the step she had taken. I wondered not that she was fearful of being forced into a state of life which few ladies of her years would chuse, but I wondered that she was not also fearful of putting herself into the power of a man who loved her, and whom she passionately loved. She must certainly either not have considered the dangers to which she might be exposed, or have depended too much on the strength of her own virtue. Besides, she could not

be so ignorant as not to know that no woman can be made a nun, any more than she can be made a wife, against her will; and a less share of courage than she shewed in this midnight elopement, would have enabled her, on her entrance within the walls of the convent, to declare she had neither call nor inclination to receive the veil; on which neither the abbess, nor the bishop of the diocese, could have consented to her admission into holy orders. It is true, that her father might have confined her there a pensioner as long as he thought fit; but as this would not have answered his end in devoting her to the service of the church, by way of propitiation for his offences, there is no doubt to be made but that he would shortly have recalled her home; and perhaps, too, been convinced of his folly in attempting a thing so absurd in itself, as well as cruel to his daughter.

I am sensible, that many of my fair young readers will be apt to quarrel with me for my animadversions on Isabinda's conduct in this point, and cry out, if they were in her place they would do the same. It is very likely, indeed, that they would do so; and full as likely that they would meet with something to make them heartily repent of their inadvertency. There are others again, who will say, that they can have no compassion for whatever misfortunes may befall a girl who thus rashly throws herself under the protection of a man not akin to her: but I believe the number of those who are so hard-hearted will be very few; except some professed prudes, who exclaim violently against the least misconduct in publick, yet make no scruple of giving themselves the greatest loose in private.

But to return to the melancholy detail I am now upon. Having little to do with my time the next morning, I went to the house where I knew Isabinda was placed for shelter from her father's power. I gained an easy access, the door being open, as is generally the custom in mean houses. On my going up stairs, I found the unhappy beauty sitting in a very pensive posture, leaning her head against the corner of a cupboard, which I suppose served her for a larder; for I saw a small slice of butter and the remains of a half-penny roll lying. Frequent sighs issued from her breast, and some tears fell.

fell. Strange indeed would it have been, if a young lady, bred up in all the delicacies of life, could have worn a chearful countenance in such a change of situation; though, as the fellow had told his master, the room, and all the furniture it contained, was extremely clean, and shewed the housewifery of the owner, yet nothing could have more the face of poverty.

She seemed buried, as it were, in a profound contemplation; when the sound of somebody coming up the stairs made her raise her head a little, probably guessing from whom it proceeded. *Lyfimor* presently appeared; and, on sight of him, a dawn of joy overspread her face. He ran to her, embraced her, and said the most tender things, intermixed with some expressions of concern, that the necessity of her being concealed left him not the power of providing a place for her more suitable to her merit and his affection. She could not now restrain her tears from flowing, which occasioned the following discourse.

Isabinda. Ah, *Lyfimor*, I beg you will not talk to me in this manner; but rather use all your rhetoric to assist my weak endeavours to suit my humour to my condition! To be easy, I must forget what I have been, and wish to be no more than what I am.

Lyfimor. You never can be other than the most charming and most worthy of your sex.

Isabinda. Alas! I have no longer any pretence to compliments like these; I have now, as the poet says—

‘ No name, no family to call my own;
‘ But am an outcast, and a vagabond.’

As such I must hereafter live: and, that I may lose all remembrance of my former state, I have brought away my jewels and best apparel, for no other end than to dispose of them, and purchase others more conformable to my future circumstances.

Lyfimor. Torture not thus a heart to which you are dearer than the vital blood that gives it motion! Can you believe I would suffer you to part with any of those appendages to your birth and rank? No, I would rather add to them. Do you not know that my whole fortune is at your devotion?

Isabinda. I must not, Sir, accept it.

Lyfimor. Why not accept? too scrupulous *Isabinda*! But if you are above receiving the tribute of a lover, command whatever you may have occasion for on the score of a brother. My dear *Adario*, I know, will readily discharge the obligation.

Isabinda. I am sure he will; and on that condition, if Providence presents no other way for my support, will not refuse your generous offer.

Lyfimor. Think then no more of submitting to any thing unworthy of your character. I flatter myself our misfortunes are not of long continuance; that your father will repent him of his cruel resolution, and mine forget the affront offered to his family, and we may yet be happy.

Isabinda. I dare not entertain a hope so distant.

Lyfimor. You know not how prophetic my passion may prove. In the mean time, I should be glad, methinks, to be made acquainted with the motive that has caused this sudden revolution in our fate.

Isabinda. Though I am loth to expose the secrets, I might say the follies, of a father, yet I cannot refuse you.

Perceiving now that she was preparing herself to make a detail of those particulars I had heard before, and in a preceding chapter have communicated to the reader, I would not stay to hear a second repetition, but came away, and left the lovers together for that time. From thence I went to the house of *Flaminio*; where I found, as I expected, every thing in distraction: messengers running backwards and forwards; some returning from their fruitless search of *Isabinda*, others going to places where they had not before been sent; and the old gentleman himself so overcome with rage and grief, that he was scarce capable of giving the necessary orders for what he most desired.

Some other adventures, which I shall hereafter publish, then falling in my way, I had no leisure to make a second visit to *Isabinda* for the space of near three weeks. But how shall I express my concern for that unfortunate young lady, when, on my going thither, I found her in the manner I did, and that all the apprehensions I had been in on her account had but too solid a foundation! When wild desire presides over the heart of man, what is his boasted honour? what

what his virtue? what his regard for the happiness and reputation of the woman he pretends to love?—all shadowy nothings, vain ideas, which, like the Sybil's words wrote on the leaves of trees, are blown off and scattered through the air with every gust of passion. But to proceed.

No obstruction being in my way, I passed directly up to Isabinda's chamber; but finding the door fast locked, began to imagine she was either removed, or had ventured out to take the air; and was going down again, when I was prevented by the murmuring sound of persons talking within. I then put my ear close to the key-hole, and easily knew the voices to be those of Lyfemor and Isabinda; on which I resolved to wait till the door should be opened, and in about three or four minutes after the woman of the house came up with two dishes of chocolate and some biscuits on a plate. She had the key in her pocket, and immediately gave entrance to me as well as herself. It was now more than past mid-day, yet Isabinda had not left her bed. Lyfemor was sitting on the side of it, as lately risen; having both his feet on a chair, without either shoes or slippers. I was a little surprized at seeing him in this posture; till the chocolate being served, he said to the woman—

Lyfemor. Has Jeffery prepared my boots, as I directed last night?

Woman. Yes, an please your honour. He has so besplashed them, and made the horses heels so dirty, that one would swear they had come a journey of twenty miles this morning.

Lyfemor. That's right. It would have been ridiculous, after telling my father that I was gone a hunting, to have come home as clean as out of a lady's bedchamber. But go, and bid Jeffery bring the boots.

Lyfemor spoke this with a very gay air, but Isabinda hung down her head; and, on the fellow's coming in, hid her face behind the curtain, nor uttered a syllable while he was in the room, which was no longer than to equip his master for departure. Lyfemor was no sooner ready, and his servant withdrawn, than he approached the bed, and began to take his leave of Isabinda, with a very tender embrace, accompanied with some soft words. She made no other reply, for a considerable time, than returning

his caresses; but at last broke out into these expressions—

Isabinda. Ah, Lyfemor, should you forget your vows, despise the conquest you have gained, and leave me to lament my easy faith, how miserable, how abandoned beyond the power of words to express, would be the condition of your Isabinda!

Lyfemor. Unkind and causeless apprehension! My dearest love, let not the thoughts of such impossibilities disturb you. Could I be ungrateful, after being made happy in this proof of your affection, I must be lost to all sense of honour, unworthy of the name of man, and even to breathe vital air.

Isabinda. Well, then, I must, I will believe you; nor repent what I have done. But tell me, when will you come again?

Lyfemor. To-morrow, if I can; if not, you may depend on seeing me next day. Be assured, that every hour will seem an age to me till I see you. Farewell, thou softest, loveliest of thy sex!

He went; but, as I then fancied, with more the air of triumph than of real tenderness or respect in his deportment. Isabinda then called for the woman of the house to assist her in rising; and I left the place, with a heart full of forebodings for her future fate: indeed I truly pitied the ruined maid; and wished she never might have occasion to cry out, with Monimia in the tragedy—

How often has he sworn
Nature should change, the sun and stars
grow dark,
Ere he would falsify his vows to me?
Make haste confusion, then—sun, lose thy
light,
And stars drop down with sorrow to the
earth,
For he is false—
False as the winds, the water, or the
weather;
Cruel as tigers o'er their trembling prey!
I feel him in my breast! he tears my
heart!
And at each sigh he drinks the gushing
blood!

My curiosity having received this painful satisfaction, I imagined not that any farther discoveries, at least that would be material enough to compensate for the trouble I should take, could be made in relation to these lovers; and therefore thought of returning no more, either to the

the apartment of Isabinda, or to the house of Lyfemor. I should, indeed, have endeavoured to lose all memory of this unhappy transaction, if the talk of the town had not continually reminded me of it. Every one was full of Isabinda's flight. Few, if any, besides myself, were acquainted with the motive of it; and none knew to what place she was retired: and the perfect ignorance people were in on both these scores, occasioned various conjectures, and rendered the wonder much more lasting than otherwise it would have been.

But this was not all. Flaminio, pierced through with grief and indignation on not being able to find his daughter, and perhaps, too, with some mixture of remorse for the cause he had given her to leave him, fell into a violent fever, of which he died, after languishing some days. By his last testament he bequeathed to his daughter, if ever she should be found, the sum of three thousand pounds; in order, as he caused it to be expressed in the writing, to keep her above the contempt of the world; and likewise, by the smallness of the portion, to keep her in perpetual remembrance of the false step she had taken.

Soon after this, I received certain intelligence, that Lyfemor was making his publick addresses to a fine young lady with a very large fortune. I doubted not but this was that same Emilia whom I had heard his father so strongly recommend, and was fired with the utmost impatience to see how poor Isabinda would behave on both these events. Accordingly, I went once more to the house where she had been concealed; but, to my great disappointment, found she was gone from thence; nor could all my search, joined with the assistance of my Invisible Belt, enable me, for some time, to discover to what part of the town or country she was removed.

CHAP. V.

COMPLEATS THE CATASTROPHE OF THIS TRULY TRAGICAL ADVENTURE.

ADARIO had proceeded on his travels no farther than Paris, when the account of his father's death obliged

him to return to England with all possible expedition. Soon after his coming, I made an unseen visit at his house, where I found him, not like most young heirs, exulting in being the entire master of himself and fortune, and contriving in what kind of luxuries he should dispose of both, but full of the most sincere and unaffected sorrow. He was, indeed, one of those few sons who look on the possession of an estate as no equivalent for the loss of a good parent, such as Flaminio ever had been to both his children, till that fatal caprice, which drove his daughter from his protection, had brought on her undoing, his own death, and was the source of other calamities of a yet more dreadful nature, as will presently appear.

The story of Isabinda's elopement, and the uncertainty what fate had since attended her, was a matter of great affliction to this young gentleman. He loved his sister with a very tender affection, and had hoped to have seen her, by this time, married to Lyfemor: but as his esteem for that friend was no way lessened by the match being broke off; and besides, expecting to be better informed by him of the particulars of that affair, than he could be by any other person, he was impatient to see him, and I found had sent him that morning notice of his arrival; for a letter, in answer to his message, was delivered to him while I was there, the contents whereof were these—

' TO ADARIO.

' SIR,

' I Congratulate you on your safe return to England, and should gladly have paid my compliments to you in person, if that honour had not been prohibited by an authority which I must not presume to contend with. My father, resenting the affront given by yours, which you cannot but have been informed of, has forbid me, under the penalty of his eternal displeasure, to converse with any of your family. He was at home when your servant came, and heard the message you sent delivered to me; on which he repeated his former injunction, and exacted a solemn oath of my obedience to it. You will therefore pardon my not waiting on you, and believe, that
' the

' the discontinuance of our acquaintance
' will always be extremely regretted by
' him who is, with all due respect, Sir,
' your most obedient servant,

' LYSIMOR.'

' Alas!' cried Adario, throwing the letter from him as soon as he had read it, ' how cold, how distant, is the air of this letter! how different from those I have been accustomed to receive from Lysimor! I find that, by one unlucky accident, I have at once lost a father, a sister, and a friend.'

I thought I had now entirely done with this family; for, as Isabinda was not to be found, I expected nothing of consequence could be learned either at the house of Lysimor or Adario, so intended to make no more visits to those gentlemen. Chance, however, about five months afterwards, changed my resolution, and threw something in my way which no diligence of my own could ever have attained. As I was going one morning on my invisible progression, I happened to pass by the house of Adario. He was at the door, and about to step into a hackney-coach which waited for him; when a fellow, who had the appearance of a groom, came running towards him, almost breathless with the haste he had made, and cried out—' Oh, Sir, I have joyful news for you! I beg your honour will turn back to hear it.' These words revived my former curiosity; and finding Adario complied with his servant's request, I followed them into the parlour, and was witness of the ensuing discourse.

Groom. Oh, Sir, I have seen my young lady!

Adario. What young lady? Not my sister!

Groom. Yes, indeed, Sir! As I was going to fetch the horse your honour sent me for, I saw Madam Isabinda looking through the window of a house at the corner of a little lane just by Islington.

Adario. Are you sure it was she?

Groom. As sure as I am alive, Sir! Though, poor lady, she is very much altered; very thin, and pale.

Adario. I fancy you are mistaken. If my sister were so near London, she would certainly either have sent or come, to claim the legacy left her by my father, which I suppose she has need enough

of by this time. I am resolved to be convinced, notwithstanding. Do you think she lodges there?

Groom. Yes, Sir; for she was all undressed, and looked as if she was just out of bed.

Adario. And can you know the house again?

Groom. O yes, Sir; I took particular notice of it.

Adario. Well, then, I will only send an excuse to the gentleman I was to meet this morning, and go directly. You shall get upon the coach-box, and order the fellow where to drive; but let him stop short of the house, that my sister, if it be she, may not be apprized of my coming before she sees me.

While Adario was calling one of his footmen to send on the message he had mentioned, I ran to the end of the street, went into a narrow dark passage, and plucked off my Belt; then having recovered the appearance of what I am, a real substance, I popped into an empty coach that had just set down a fare, and bid the driver to follow wherever that went which was standing at Adario's door. Both the coaches drove with such speed, that we soon reached the end of our little journey. I quitted my vehicle the moment I saw the other preparing to stop; but though I made all imaginable haste to put on my Belt, I could scarce have regained my invisibility time enough to have entered with Adario, if he had not met with an obstruction in his passage from the woman of the house, who at first denied she had any lady lodged with her; then said, she had none of the name he enquired for: on which he replied with some heat, that the lady might have reasons for concealing her real name. ' But tell her,' cried he, ' that mine is Adario; that I am her brother, and must needs see her.' On this she seemed somewhat more compliable, and said she would go and acquaint the lady. Accordingly she went up stairs; but Adario was too impatient to wait her return, and followed her directly: I was but one step behind him; and we were both in the room before she could deliver any part of her message.

Isabinda was adjusting something about her dress before a looking-glass; but happening to turn her head just as Adario was within the door, shrieked out—' Oh heavens, my brother!' and with these words

words fell back in her chair. The woman went to fetch some water. Adario ran to support the fainting fair; but happening to cast his eyes upon the table, saw a letter lying there, the superscription of which was in Isabinda's hand, and addressed to Lysimor. Emotions more strong than pity, at this time, made him quit his sister to examine the contents of this surprizing billet, which were these—

‘MY DEAR, DEAR LYSIMOR!

‘**F**OR such you are, and ever must be, to my fond doating heart; though I have too much cause to fear the tender epithet is now no longer pleasing to you. Ah, Lysimor, how sad is the reverse of my condition! From seeing you twice or thrice every week, I now see you not once a month; and even then how cold is your behaviour! how short your visits! How cruel is this to one who neither can, nor wishes, to enjoy any conversation but yours! For pity's sake, if not for love, render my life more easy, at least for the present, whatever you do hereafter. The infant I carry within me sympathizes in it's mother's anguish, and continually upbraids you with convulsive heavings. Even if your vows of everlasting constancy should be forgot, let some consideration of the unborn innocent, the pledge of our once mutual loves, oblige you to treat with less indifference it's unhappy mother,

‘The ruined ISABINDA.

‘P. S. I can no longer bear your absence, else would not have troubled you with this complaint.’

What a letter was this to fall into a brother's hands! Never did I see a man in such distraction. ‘Villain! villain Lysimor!—Wretched Isabinda!’ cried he out. Then turning towards her—‘But there needed not this proof in thy own hand,’ added he; ‘thy shame is but too visible.’ Isabinda, who by the assistance of the woman was now recovered from her swoon, but not enough to hear what her brother said, threw herself at his feet, and, with streaming eyes, addressed him in these terms—

Isabinda. Oh, Sir! can you forgive my concealing myself from you?

Adario. Would to God that there were equal reason to forgive the cause!

Isabinda at this instant turning up her eyes, beheld her letter in his hand, and cried out, with the greatest vehemence—‘I am now undone, indeed! irrecoverably lost to all hope of pardon or pity!—my shame exposed to him from whom, of all the world, it should have been most hid!’

Adario. Rise, sister, and cease these unavailing exclamations. Your shame will receive no addition by my knowledge of it; rather, perhaps, be remedied. But tell, and tell me truly, has Lysimor ever promised marriage to you?

Isabinda. A thousand and a thousand times, and bound himself to the performance by the most solemn imprecations.

Adario. Then he is doubly a villain! and, if you believe him, you are doubly deceived. He courts another woman.

Isabinda. Indeed, of late, I have suspected this, and often accused him of it, and he as often has sworn it.

Adario. Mere words of course! But say, have you no testimony, under his own hand, of the promise he made you, either by letter or by formal obligation?

Isabinda. None, none, alas!

On this Adario bit his lips, walked two or three times about the room, then paused, and seemed as if debating within himself in what manner he should behave: at last sat down; and taking the still weeping Isabinda by the hand, endeavoured to assuage her grief.

Adario. Come, Isabinda, dry your tears. Love and credulity have seduced your innocence. Great has been your fault; but yet I cannot forget you are my sister, and that you have no friend but me on whom you can depend for consolation. What is past cannot be recalled, but it may be redressed. Be assured you shall one way or other have justice.

Isabinda. Ah, Sir, I beseech you proceed not to extremities! If by my crime you should be involved in any danger or perplexities, it would sink me quite.

Adario. I hope there will be no occasion. Lysimor was once a man of honour, and may yet return to his first principles.

principles. On this you may rely, that I shall do nothing rashly, nor inconsistent with your interest and reputation.

After this, they fell into some discourse concerning the strange resolution Flaminio had taken of sending her to a monastery; the particulars of which the reader being already acquainted with, I shall pass over in silence. When Adario took his leave, he did it with a great deal of affection: but I was much divided in my thoughts, whether I should stay with Isabinda, or follow Adario home; the latter seemed most flattering to my curiosity, as, by many tokens, I perceived he had something in his head which he was impatient to put in execution. I was not deceived in my conjectures: Adario was no sooner in his own house, than he flew to his bureau; and, without taking any time for deliberation, wrote this epistle to Lyfemor—

‘SIR,
‘CONSCIOUS guilt, without those
‘ commands you seem so zealous
‘ in observing, might well make you
‘ avoid the presence of a person you
‘ have so greatly injured. When I re-
‘ commended you to my sister, it was in
‘ order to become her protector, not her
‘ undoer. How cruelly you have abused
‘ this confidence, let your own heart re-
‘ mind you! But I have some hope,
‘ how much soever appearances at pre-
‘ sent are to the contrary, you still in-
‘ tend to do justice to your promises to
‘ Isabinda, and the claim she has to
‘ your affection. I need not tell you,
‘ that you can repair the misfortune you
‘ have brought upon her no otherwise
‘ than by an honourable marriage: I
‘ am ready to fulfil the agreement made
‘ between our fathers on that score,
‘ and give my sister the sum of eight
‘ thousand pounds, as was then stipu-
‘ lated. If you comply with this pro-
‘ posal, I shall be glad to see you at her
‘ lodgings, there to settle every thing:
‘ if not, shall expect you will meet me
‘ in another place; and give me the sa-
‘ tisfaction which every gentleman has
‘ a right to demand when he finds him-
‘ self ill used. I attend your determi-
‘ nation; and am, &c.

‘ADARIO.’

He sent this by one of his servants, with a charge to give it into Lyfemor’s own

hands, and wait his answer. After which, being told dinner was ready, he went down, and placed himself at the table, though I believe with very little appetite; for his countenance had upon it all the marks of the greatest inward disturbance, which was not at all lessened when his man returned with this from Lyfemor—

‘SIR,
‘SINCE I find you are so well ac-
‘ quainted with a secret which,
‘ for the lady’s sake, I could wish had
‘ been inviolably kept, I think my-
‘ self obliged to deal sincerely with you
‘ on the occasion. You may be as-
‘ sured I can behave to no woman,
‘ much less your sister, otherwise than
‘ becomes a man of honour: but mar-
‘ riage is a thing quite out of the ques-
‘ tion, as I am certain my father never
‘ would consent to it. If any promises
‘ on that account ever escaped my lips,
‘ I remember nothing of them, and
‘ could inake them with no other view
‘ than to give her modesty an excuse for
‘ yielding. I am sorry, however, for
‘ what has happened: but you cannot
‘ be insensible of the frailties of flesh
‘ and blood; and must know, as well
‘ as I, that when two young people,
‘ who like each other, are much alone
‘ together, such accidents will natu-
‘ rally occur. The resentment you
‘ threaten, on my non-compliance with
‘ your proposal, appears therefore to me
‘ a little unreasonable; I shall, notwith-
‘ standing, be ready to give you the
‘ satisfaction you desire, at any time or
‘ place you shall appoint. Yours, &c.

‘LYSIMOR.’

All the blood now seemed to have forsook the heart of Adario to rush into his face: his lips trembled, his very eyeballs started with excess of passion. He hesitated not a moment what he should do; but, in this tempest of his mind, wrote as follows to Lyfemor—

‘SIR,
‘I Want words to return the insolence
‘ and ingratitude of your reply;
‘ but have a sword at your service,
‘ which I expect you will try the metal
‘ of to-morrow morning about seven,
‘ in the field behind Montague House.
‘ As the dispute between us will ad-
‘ mit

'mit of no witnesses, pray come
'alone to

'ADARIO.'

Though I knew my own dinner waited for me, I could not prevail on myself to go home, till Adario had dispatched this billet to Lyfimor, and the servant who carried it was come back from that gentleman with a small slip of paper tied up, containing only these words—

'SIR,

'YOU may depend that I shall not
'fail to meet you as desired.

'LYSIMOR.'

I now quitted the house of Adario; but, after having related the pains I had already taken, I believe nobody will suppose I neglected going the next morning to the field, to see the issue of this combat. I found Adario was there first; but though he waited only a very few minutes for Lyfimor, his impatience made him not forbear saluting him in this manner.

Adario. I began to think, Lyfimor, that the shame of having done a base action would not suffer you to defend it.

Lyfimor. Sir, whatever I dare do, I always dare defend.

Adario. Then, Sir, this is no time for words.

Lyfimor. I am ready for you, Sir.

Here ceased all farther speech between them, and on the part of Lyfimor for ever. On the second push, Adario ran him quite through the body; he fell that instant, and expired with only a single groan. His successful antagonist approached the body; and finding life was totally extinguished, gave a sigh or two to the memory of a man he once had called his friend, then made the best of his way home, in order to provide for his own security, which the likelihood there was of the challenge he had sent to the deceased being found rendered highly necessary.

The measures he took, indeed, were very prudent. He sent immediately to hire a post-chaise, which was to wait for him in a street he mentioned, at some distance from that in which he lived; carried no baggage with him, but ordered a servant to follow him with it to Calais; staid no longer at his own house than to write two short letters; the one

to a gentleman who had been one of the executors of his father's will, which being only on family affairs, need not be here inserted; the other was to his sister Isabinda, and contained these lines—

'SISTER,

'FAILING to repair your wrongs
'by the way I hoped, I have re-
'venged them by the death of your se-
'ducer; for which I am obliged this
'moment to leave my native country,
'perhaps for ever. I have done what
'the honour of our family exacted from
'me. It belongs to you to regulate
'your future conduct, so as to atone,
'in some measure, for the errors of the
'past. To enable you to do this, you
'ought to keep in eternal remembrance,
'that the follies of your fatal passion
'have not only brought the object of it
'to an untimely grave, but also drove
'from all the social joys of life, into
'an irksome banishment in a foreign
'land, him who might have been hap-
'py, if he had not been your brother,

'ADARIO.'

Thinking, perhaps, he had been somewhat too severe in the above, he added this postscript, by way of cordial—

'P. S. I shall constantly write to
'Mr. D——n: he will be able to
'inform you how to direct for me.
'You may be assured I shall re-
'ceive with pleasure any letters
'that bring me an account of your
'welfare; and, in spite of all that
'has happened, do you every ser-
'vice in my power.'

After having sent this by the groom who had first discovered the place of her abode, and given some necessary instructions to his other servants, he hurried away to meet the post-chaise, and I saw him no more. As I had truly pitied Isabinda, I could not forbear going to see in what manner she supported this last dreadful accident. On my entrance, she was in bed, and surrounded by women and physicians. I gathered from their discourse, that the surprise and grief she had been in had caused an abortion, accompanied with fits of a very dangerous nature. On my next visit, however, I found her youth, and the strength of her constitution, had got the better of her disease; but though the pains

pains of her body were removed, those of her mind still remained: she was extremely melancholy, had a thorough contempt for the world; and the thoughts of a monastery were now so far from being shocking to her, that she resolved to fly to one, as the only asylum from censure and from care. Accordingly, as I was afterwards informed, she went, on the re-establishment of her health, to Paris, and entered herself into the society of Benedictine Nuns; where I doubt not but she often sees her brother through the grate, as he still continues to reside in that city.

I have now finished all the account I am able to give of this melancholy transaction; in which the justice of Providence seems to me to be distinguished in somewhat of a peculiar manner; and may serve as a warning to our gay, amorous sparks, not to become the seducers of unwary innocence; especially if they will be at the trouble of reflecting, how the perfidy and ingratitude of Flaminio to the believing Harriot was afterwards retorted on his own darling daughter.

CHAP. VI.

GIVES THE ACCOUNT OF AN OCCURRENCE NO LESS REMARKABLE THAN ENTERTAINING; AND SHEWS, THAT THERE IS SCARCE ANY DIFFICULTY SO GREAT, BUT IT MAY BE GOT OVER BY THE HELP OF A READY INVENTION, IF PROPERLY EXERTED.

TO make some atonement for my last melancholy recital, to those of my readers who may not care to have their heads filled with subjects of too serious a nature, I shall now present them with one more likely to put in motion the risible muscles of the face, than to extort the falling of unwilling tears.

A gentleman, whom I shall call Conrade, had lived to the age of sixty without ever testifying the least inclination to marriage. He had been a man of pleasure in his youth; and probably the too great success he then found among the fair, had deterred him from entering into an honourable engagement with any of the sex: but there is no accounting for change of sentiment in this point; an accident sometimes puts that into our heads which before we never thought

of, or perhaps had an aversion to, as it fell out in the case of the gentleman I am speaking of. A long friendship had subsisted between him and Murcio; a gentleman who, though not so far advanced in years, had made a better use of his time; had been married, and was the father of three fine daughters, two of whom had always lived with him; but the youngest, after the death of his wife, was taken from him, and brought up under the care of an aunt in the country. The eldest of these ladies being now about to be disposed of in marriage, Conrade received and accepted an invitation to the wedding. Melanthe, sister to the bride, was a fine sparkling girl of nineteen; but whether it were that she appeared in reality more lovely than usual, or that the mirth and pleasantries common at such solemnities rekindled the long-smothered embers of amorous desire in the breast of Conrade, so it was, that he, who had been in the company of this young lady without ever taking any notice of her charms, all at once became extremely smitten with them; insomuch, that he resolved to acquaint her father with his new passion, and ask his consent to make his addresses to her; which he did not at all despair of obtaining on the terms he intended to propose.

Murcio had a pretty country-house at a village about ten or twelve miles up the river; where he constantly went every Saturday, and staid till Monday or Tuesday, and sometimes longer. It was while he was in this retirement, that Conrade chose to communicate to him the business he had in his head: accordingly he went thither, and found him entirely alone; Melanthe having been prevented from going, as she was accustomed to do, by a violent fit of the tooth-ache. This our old lover looked upon as a good omen, being desirous to engage the father in favour of his passion before he made any declaration to the daughter. He began with saying, that he now repented having lived so long a bachelor; that having a very large estate, he should be glad of an heir to enjoy it; that if he could prevail on a young lady whom he liked to marry him, he would endeavour to atone for the want of youth by all the indulgences in the power of a fond husband: and having thus prepared the way, told him, that if he thought proper to be-

stow Melanthe upon him, he would desire no other fortune than her person; yet would settle a dowry upon her superior to what might be expected if she brought him ten thousand pounds.

It is not to be imagined with what greediness Murcio swallowed this proposal: he did not even affect to hesitate, or make the least demur at accepting it; on the contrary, he replied, that nothing could afford him a greater satisfaction than such an alliance, and that he doubted not but Melanthe would receive the honour he intended her as a woman who knew her own interest and happiness. Both parties being equally transported, every thing was immediately agreed upon between them: but Murcio not being able to assure himself that his daughter would so readily comply as he had made the lover hope she would; and fearing that, if she should give the old gentleman a rebuff on his first onset, it might discourage him from making a second, and perhaps overturn the whole affair, resolved not to hazard the loss of so advantageous a match by leaving it to her own choice, but sent a special messenger to her with a letter, the contents whereof are these—

‘DEAR CHILD,

‘MY worthy friend Conrade has taken a great liking to you, and will make you his wife on such terms as would but little prove the paternal affection I have for you to reject. Be not you less thankful to Heaven for so unhop’d a blessing than I am; nor, on any foolish pretences, either slight, or seem to slight, the good presented to you. If you consider the vast advantages of this match, a disparity of years can be no objection. I say thus much, because I would convince your reason, not enforce your action; for I should be sorry to find myself oblig’d to make use of the authority I have over you in a thing which you ought, and I hope will, receive with the same satisfaction I propose it. Know, however, that I have already agreed on every thing for your marriage; that your future husband is now here, and we shall both be in town either to-morrow or the ensuing day. I send this on purpose to prepare you to behave towards him in a proper manner, and as it is the absolute command

‘of him who is your affectionate father,

‘MURCIO.’

I stood behind Melanthe’s chair while she was reading this epistle, and never did I see a poor young creature in such agitations. Scarce had she come to the end of the first period, before she cried out—‘His wife! his wife! What terms can the old creature propose to compensate for the odious title of wife to such a wretch!’ Then going a little farther—‘Justly, indeed,’ said she, ‘does my father suspect my obedience in this point; death itself would not be so dreadful to me as compliance.’ The more she proceeded, the higher her distraction grew. ‘What! fix my doom at once!’ raved she out; ‘at once resolve to cut me off from all the joys of life, and condemn me to everlasting misery! Is this a parent’s love! Oh, ’tis most cruel, most unnatural!’ I know not to what extravagances she might have been hurried, by the sudden rush of grief and despair, if tears now had not afforded their relief; but though they a little softened the asperity of her passion, they had not the power to subdue it: her tongue, indeed, ceased from exclaiming against her fate; but the agonies of her countenance discovered how much she inwardly regretted it. While she was in this distressful and pity-moving situation, the gay, the lively Florimel, came in. This young lady was the most beloved and intimate companion that Melanthe had; she saw her almost every day, and always entered without ceremony. She seem’d a little surprized, at first sight, to find her thus; but immediately recovering herself, approach’d her with her accustomed sprightliness.

Florimel. Heyday, Melanthe! what, in the name of wonder, makes you in this pickle? Is your favourite squirrel dead? or has any accident happened to your last new petit-en-l’air? or what other misfortune has befallen you?

Melanthe. O Florimel, what would I not give to be in thy condition!

Florimel. My condition! Why, what do you find to envy in my condition?

Melanthe. To have no father to controul your actions by an unreasonable exertion of his authority.

Florimel. Why, truly, as you say, these old dads are troublesome enough sometimes;

sometimes; yet, for all that, I should be heartily glad mine were alive again. But pray, what has yours done to make you wish yourself an orphan?

Melanthe. Read that, and see if I have not cause.

In speaking these words, she pointed to her father's letter, which lay open on the table. Florimel took it up, and read it, as desired. On examining the contents, she could not help looking a little grave; but having finished, resumed the discourse with her former vivacity.

Florimel. As sure as I am alive, both these old gentlemen are crack-brained; the one in thinking of you for a wife, and the other in consenting to give you such a husband.

Melanthe. One would, indeed, imagine they were not in their senses.

Florimel. For my part, I am so astonished, that I can scarce believe I am awake. But what will you do?

Melanthe. Nothing.

Florimel. 'Nothing can come of 'nothing,' as King Lear says in the play. I am less surprized, however, at your stupidity in so perplexing a dilemma, than I am at the folly of those who have involved you in it. Bless me! what can either your lover or father propose to themselves by such a disproportionate alliance, but horns on the one side, and disgrace to his family on the other?

Melanthe. No, Florimel, it shall never come to that; I will rather starve or beg.

Florimel. Look'ye, my dear, neither starving nor begging, as I take it, will agree with your constitution; something else must be thought on.

Melanthe. What else?

Florimel. Do you think, that when your father comes to know what an implacable aversion you have to this match, he will not be prevailed upon to recal the promise he has made to Conrade?

Melanthe. Impossible! I know his temper too well to flatter myself with such a hope. You might as well think to blow St. Paul's from it's foundation with a single breath, as move him to recede from any thing he has once resolved.

Florimel. Well, then, suppose some way could be contrived to make Conrade himself fly off? I have a project in my head that promises fair for it, if you will agree to join in the execution.

It is this: you must admit a spruce young gallant to lie with you all night; Conrade must be informed of the amour, in such a manner as to make him convinced of the truth of it; and the deuce is in him, if afterwards he insists on marrying you.

Melanthe. Fie, Florimel! How can you be so cruel as to railly my misfortunes?

Florimel. No, I protest I am as serious as a judge upon a criminal cause; and would have you make the experiment.

Melanthe. What, wouldst thou have me turn prostitute to avoid marriage!

Florimel. No such matter. I will engage that the gallant I mean shall lie as harmless by your side as an infant.

Melanthe. Pr'ythee do not torture me with such riddles.

Florimel. I shall presently explain them. The gallant I am speaking of, and who is to be your bedfellow, is no other than my own individual self. I shall put on a suit of my brother's cloaths; and do not doubt but that, when I am dressed and equipped in all my accoutrements, I shall be a figure handsome enough to make an old man jealous.

Melanthe. Sure never was so wild a scheme! But yet I cannot conceive how it is to be conducted, or which way it can answer the end you propose by it.

Florimel. Lord, you are strangely dull! or affect to be so; but I will shew you what I shall write to Conrade, and that may help to enlighten your understanding.

This witty lady waited not to hear what reply her friend would make, but ran to a desk; and immediately wrote the following lines—

' TO HUGH CONRADE, ESQ.

' SIR.

' EVER since I heard of your intended marriage with Melanthe, I have been divided in my thoughts, whether the treachery of betraying a secret entrusted to me, or, by concealing it, expose a gentleman of your character to the worst of mischiefs, would be the most dishonourable action. The latter consideration has at last prevailed; and I think it my duty to inform you, that the lady you are about to make your wife has neither heart nor honour to bestow upon you;

' both

'both are already disposed of to a person she thinks more agreeable to her years. Not content with the many private assignations she has with him abroad, she frequently makes pretences, when her father goes into the country, to be left at home; where her chambermaid, who is in the secret, admits this happy lover at midnight, and lets him out early in the morning, before the other servants of the house are stirring. Murcio being gone to ****, I am well assured it will be in your power to convince yourself of the certainty of this intelligence, by sending any one on whom you can depend to watch about the door, either for the entrance or exit of the favourite gallant. Act as you please, however. I have discharged the dictates of conscience in giving you this timely warning; and am,

'Your nameless servant.'

This she gave Melanthe to read; and, as soon as she had done, was going to ask her how she approved of the contrivance; when the other prevented her, by crying out—

Melanthe. Oh the wicked, lying letter! - Dear Florimel, if this should be sent, and Conrade should shew it to my father, I believe he would kill me.

Florimel. 'Tis possible he may not shew it; but if he does, you have only to prepare yourself for a little scolding and swearing. The worst he can do is to turn you out of doors; and then, to use your own words, it can be but starving or begging.

Melanthe. Oh, but my reputation, Florimel!

Florimel. A fiddle of your reputation! Would you hazard nothing to avoid being tacked, till death do you part, to such a lump of decayed mortality as Conrade? Besides, when the affair is all over, and you are once got free from this cursed engagement, it will be easy, by unravelling the plot, to clear your reputation, and reconcile you to your father into the bargain.

Melanthe. Oh, Florimel, if I was sure of that!

Florimel. Trust to Fortune. I will lay my life that, if you behave according to my directions, every thing will go right.

Melanthe. Well, then, tell me what I am to do.

Florimel. In the first place; when your father comes home, you must seem to be as well pleased with the match as he would have you be; and pretend that you are mightily in love with Conrade's estate, whatever you are with the man. Then, as for the old wretch himself, you have nothing to do but to simper and look silly when he makes his addresses, and tell him that you are all obedience to your father's will.

Melanthe. This is a hard task, and I am a very ill dissembler; I will try, however, what I can do. But, Florimel, there is one thing that neither you nor I, as yet, have thought upon: suppose Conrade should take it into his head to watch the door himself, and draw upon you in his passion?

Florimel. What if he does? I shall have a sword as well as he.

Melanthe. But not understand so well how to use it?

Florimel. I don't know that. But if I can't fight as well, I am sure I can run much better; so pray do not be under any concern on my account.

These fair friends parted not till the night was pretty far advanced; all which time was taken up with settling some farther particulars in relation to their design. Molly, the waiting-maid, was called in; and, after a vow of secrecy, entrusted with the whole affair. She seemed a good smart girl, highly proper for the business she was to be employed in, and readily promised her assistance. As I was very near as impatient as themselves for the success of this whimsical enterprize, I went every day to Murcio's house, and found that Melanthe acted the part she had been taught by Florimel so as to give the utmost satisfaction both to her father and lover; who now talked of nothing but to have the wedding solemnized as soon as the necessary preparations for it could be made.

Saturday being arrived, I made it my business to enquire whether Murcio was gone to his country-seat; and finding he was, and that Melanthe staid at home, concluded this was the day on which the first wheel of the machine was to be put in motion; therefore hurried away to the house of Conrade, where I luckily came time enough to see him receive the letter from Florimel. The wrinkles

wrinkles of his face were greatly agitated while he was reading this epistle. At first his eyelids extended themselves; and his brows were elated with surprise, then were contracted into a frown of anger. Sometimes a sneer of contempt and unbelief lengthened the furrows round his withered lips. But the attitude of longest duration, was a pensive hanging down of his head, accompanied with counting the hairs upon his little finger; out of which at last he started, and cried to himself—'Many reasons may be urged both for and against my giving credit to this story; but whether built upon truth or malice, I have no need to be at the pains of considering: the author has pointed out the means of being convinced, and I will take his counsel.'

As I could not be certain that he would continue in this resolution, and much less so, that if he did, what the event of it would be, I went by break of day the next morning, and potted myself over-against Murcio's house. In a few minutes after Conrade came, wrapped in a cloak; but stood more aloof, yet near enough to see every thing that passed. We had not waited above a quarter of an hour, before the door we watched was softly opened, and a well-dressed beau rushed out. Conrade advanced as fast as his gout would let him; in order, I suppose, to see the face of this invader of his hoped-for happiness: but the pretended gallant was too nimble for his pursuit; but dropped a piece of paper, as if by accident flung out with his handkerchief. Conrade immediately snatched it up, and found it was a billet. The superscription seemed to have been torn off, but the contents were these—

'DEAREST OF YOUR SEX,
'MY father is gone into the country, and I have made an excuse to be left behind. Come at the usual hour, and Molly will admit you to the arms of

'Yours.'

I easily perceived that this was a second plot of the young ladies to corroborate the first; and it had all the effect they could wish; and was also productive of something else, which neither of them at that time imagined, as will appear in the succeeding chapter.

CH A P. VII.

IS A CONTINUANCE OF THIS MERRY HISTORY, WHICH PRESENTS SOMETHING AS LITTLE EXPECTED BY THE READER AS IT WAS BY THE PARTIES CONCERNED IN IT.

IT is not to be doubted but that Conrade, after having received this double confirmation of Melanthe's transgression, gave over all intentions of becoming her husband; yet, by what I could gather from his looks, and some expressions he let fall, the manner in which he should quit his pretensions was the occasion of a very great conflict in his mind. He was a good-natured man, and loth to accuse this young lady to her father; yet, to break off a match so far advanced, and which he had so earnestly solicited, without assigning any cause for the change of his resolution, he thought would not only make him appear ridiculous, but also put a final period to all conversation between him and his old friend; and he probably continued undetermined in this matter, till he found himself obliged to talk upon it to Murcio himself, who had appointed to come to town the next day in order to sign the marriage-writings. That gentleman was at home; and having expected him some hours before he came, began, in a pleasant manner, to reproach his tardiness; to which Conrade replied, very gravely—'I am indeed, Sir, somewhat beyond my time, yet, I believe, soon enough for the business which now brings me.' Murcio seemed much surprized on hearing him speak in this manner; and poor Melanthe, who was present, well knowing that this alteration in her lover's behaviour was the effect of the plot concerted between her and Florimel, trembled for the event, and was no less shocked at the thoughts how much her innocence suffered in his opinion.

It is uncertain what return Murcio would have made, for the other prevented him from speaking, by adding, to what he had said before, that he had something of a very extraordinary nature, and which required no witnesses, to communicate to him. On which he made a sign to Melanthe to

to leave the room; and she was no sooner withdrawn, than Conrade proceeded, though not without a good deal of hesitation, to declare himself in these terms—

Conrade. Dear Murcio, we have long been friends; and I should be heartily sorry that what I have to say should occasion a rupture between us. For my own part, there is no man living for whom I shall always preserve a greater esteem than for yourself.

Murcio. I cannot think, Sir, that you have any thing in your mind which should give me reason to regard you less.

Conrade. Reason is too frequently misled by passion. I know it by experience, and shall be glad to find yours is more strong; though, I confess, I have been to blame, and am sorry things have gone so far: but, Sir, I have considered that it is now too late in life for me to think of marriage, especially with so young a lady as Melanthe.

Murcio. This is an odd turn, indeed! Methinks, Sir, you should have considered this before you made any proposals of that sort, either to me or my daughter. A treaty of marriage, Sir, when concluded on and consented to by both parties, is a thing of too much consequence to be broke off by either, without putting the most gross affront upon the other.

Conrade. Not, Sir, when it can be proved that the consummation would be equally inconvenient for both.

Murcio. As how for both? My daughter has never made the least objection.

Conrade. It may be so. Yet I am well assured she neither does, nor ever can, regard me with that affection which alone could make either me or herself happy in being united.

Murcio. A mere whim! a caprice of your own, founded only on the disparity of years! and I am amazed you should think of flying off from your engagement on so shallow a pretence.

Conrade. Perhaps I may have others. Suppose I know she loves another?

Murcio. Sir, I will suppose no such thing. She love another! No, Sir, she has been bred up in principles too virtuous, and is too modest, to place her affections on any one, till my commands, and the authority of the church, made it her duty to do so: and I must tell you, Sir, it is base in you to add to

the ill usage you are about to give her, by traducing her reputation.

Conrade. I scorn the unmanly thought. Be assured I have proofs of what I say.

Murcio. Produce them, then.

Conrade. I will, since I find the justification of my own honour depends upon it. There, Sir; read that, and be convinced.

In speaking this, he gave Murcio the letter that had been sent by Florimel; which the other, after having carelessly perused, threw from him; and looking on Conrade with the utmost scorn, said to him—

Murcio. A notable proof, indeed! There are few people without some enemies: but this is a piece of scandal too gross, too stupid, and the invention too ill concerned, to pass even on the most weak and credulous mind; and seems rather a poor, low contrivance, of your own, to evade fulfilling an engagement you have taken it into your head to repent of.

Conrade. You are free in your expressions, Sir; but I believe it will presently be my turn to return that contempt you so unjustly treat me with. Do you know the hand-writing of your daughter?

Murcio. Yes, certainly I do.

Conrade. Then judge of the contents of this, and take shame to yourself for the injurious treatment you have given me.

The reader will easily imagine that it was Melanthe's little billet he now put into his hands; but no one can conceive, much less am I able to describe, the rage, the horror, the distraction, that shook the whole frame of this astonished parent, on finding himself no longer able to refuse giving credit to so terrible a misfortune. 'Death and furies!' cried he. 'Infamous, abandoned wretch!' Then, after loading her with all the foulest names that language could afford, he turned to Conrade—'Pardon me, dear Conrade,' said he. 'Had an angel told me what you did, without this cursed testimony, I should not have believed the story. But you shall have ample satisfaction: I'll turn this scandal to my family, this deceiver both of you and me, out of my doors this moment; never own her, never see her more, but leave her to the miseries she merits!' He was running out of the room; and it is probable,

bable, in the first emotions of his passion, would have done as he had threatened, if Conrade had not withheld him; and partly by force, and partly by persuasion, made him sit down, while he reasoned with him in this manner—

Conrade. Dear Murcio, compose yourself; and be not rashly guilty of a thing you hereafter may repent of. Consider that the errors of one branch of a family reflect dishonour on the whole. You have other daughters who, though pure as innocence itself, yet, being of the same blood, may be suspected liable to the same faults; for their sakes, therefore, rather smother than expose the crime of this fair offender.

Murcio. What! would you then have me to forgive, encourage, and suffer her to continue in this shameful prostitution under my own roof!

Conrade. No; but I would have you remember that she is still your child; and that it is your duty, as a father, to use your utmost efforts to retrieve her from perdition, not sink her deeper into it.

Murcio. As how retrieve her! Is she not already lost, irrecoverably lost, to reputation as well as virtue!

Conrade. Not so, I hope. All yet may be well, if her seducer can be prevailed upon to repair the injury he has done her by an honourable marriage.

Murcio. A vain expectation!

Conrade. 'Tis worth attempting, at least. But first you must oblige her to discover the name of this too happy man; for you see that, either by design or accident, the direction to him is torn off the letter.

Murcio. I protest, in the distraction of my thoughts, I had forgot that circumstance; and also to ask you by what means this infamous scrawl came into your possession.

On this Conrade related to him all the particulars he had observed while he had been watching his rival's coming out of the house; and when he had done, in order to encourage Murcio to take the advice he had just given him, added this description of the supposed gallant—

Conrade. I was very much vexed that I had not an opportunity of seeing his face; but his back being towards me, I could only take notice of his dress and air; and do assure you he has all the appearance of a man of fashion, and

such a one as to whom you could not reasonably have refused your daughter, even if this accident had never happened.

Murcio. Oh, what a curse it is to have a disobedient child!

He appeared in the most bitter anguish of mind while uttering these last words; but having recovered himself a little, took pen, ink, and paper, and wrote the following lines to Melanthe—

‘Thou Scandal to my Blood and Name!

‘**T**HAT you still live to receive
‘this, thank the gentleman whom
‘you would have wronged by intending
‘to carry pollution to his bed. He has
‘obtained a reprieve for you on this
‘condition, that you declare the name
‘and quality of your undoer, to the end
‘that I may take such measures as I
‘shall judge proper, to oblige him to do
‘justice to the honour of a family of
‘which you are the only blemish.
‘Think not to deny your crime; I have
‘the infamous witness of it under your
‘own hand: but be plain and open in
‘your confession, if you hope ever to
‘obtain mercy, either from Heaven or
‘your offended father,

‘MURCIO.’

After having shewed this to Conrade, he called for the waiting-maid, and bid her give that letter to her mistress, and bring him an immediate answer. I followed, and saw with what agonies poor Melanthe read this cruel mandate. Between the fears of what her father's indignation might inflict upon her, and the shame of appearing guilty of a crime her soul disdained, she was so much overwhelmed, that for some minutes she had not power to speak; and when she did, it was only to utter this exclamation—

Melanthe. What will become of me! Oh this vile plot of Florimel's!

Molly. Lord, Madam, do not put yourself into this flurry! You know your father's temper well enough, and could not expect he would be less severe. But it will be all over; and you must resolve to bear it for a while.

Melanthe. I cannot, will not bear it! I will go down this instant, disclose all, and clear my innocence.

Molly. Sure, Madam, you would not be so mad! What, would you undo all, and be forced to marry Conrade at last?

H

Melanthe.

Melanthe. Was there ever so terrible a dilemma! What answer can I give?

Molly. Dear Madam, say any thing. Tell him you are in love with—
Say any thing but the truth.

Melanthe. How silly am I to ask advice of such a giddy creature!

With this she turned herself towards a table whereon stood a standish, sat down, paused a while, then began to write; but had scarce finished two lines, before she left off, tore the paper, mused again, and then began afresh. The second essay met with the same fate as the former, and so did several succeeding ones; till at last she threw the pen out of her hand, started up, and said—

Melanthe. 'Tis in vain to attempt it. I cannot write.

Molly. Why then, Madam, say nothing: e'en let him think as he pleases, at present. If you will but pluck up a spirit, we shall do well enough. He will not kill you, for his own sake; and as for any thing else, you must content yourself to submit to it. Nothing can be so bad as marrying Conrade. I will go to Florimel presently: if I am so lucky as to find her at home, 'tis ten to one but she puts something into our heads.

Melanthe. Do so. I wish she were here.

While they were speaking, Murcio called very loud at the bottom of the stairs for Molly to come down; on which she said—'Do you hear, Madam? But I must face the storm, for fear it should come hither, and terrify you worse. I wish you had as much courage as I have.'

She said no more, but ran hastily down into the parlour; where I, with no less speed, attended her footsteps, quite impatient to hear how the pert baggage would behave.

Murcio. What is the reason, minx, that I have no answer to the letter you carried up?

Molly. Lord, Sir, there was something or other in that letter that has frightened my poor lady almost out of her wits. She does nothing but cry and wring her hands. It would make your heart ache to see her. She write an answer! No indeed, she is not in a condition to give an answer.

Murcio. If she can't, you must, hussy! Who was that fellow you let out of my house yesterday morning?

Molly. I, Sir! I let out no fellow, not I.

Murcio. 'Tis false: my friend here, happening to pass through the street at that time, saw him come out.

Molly. Why then, Sir, your friend is no better than a pickthank for bringing you such idle stories; and I am not afraid to tell him so to his face.

Murcio. Was there ever such impudence!

Conrade. Come, come, Mrs. Molly, you had better confess the truth; it will be for the good of your lady, and yourself too.

Molly. Sir, I shall not tell a lye for the matter: I let out no fellow. There was a fine gentleman, indeed, that sat up all night playing at cards with my lady, that I let out; but no fellow, I assure you.

Murcio. Well; and pray, Mrs. Brazenface, what is the name of this fine gentleman?

Molly. Lord, Sir! do you think I know the names of all the gentlemen that come to visit my lady? Indeed, I am not so impertinent as to ask.

Murcio. No equivocation. Tell me this moment, or I shall be your death!

Molly. Bless me, Sir! how can you fright a body for nothing? But, if you would be my death twenty times over, I can say no more than I have done.

Conrade. Dear Murcio, this girl is not worth the passion you are in. I hope the young lady herself will satisfy you, when once she considers how much it is her interest to do so.

Murcio. Not while she has such a hardened wretch to encourage her obstinacy.—Hussy, pack up your trumpery, and get out of my house directly, or I shall provide a place for you in Bridewell.

Molly. Oh, dear Sir! I shall not give you that trouble; there are places enough to be had without your providing.

After she had left the room, and Murcio had vented his passion in two or three hearty curses, he turned to Conrade, and, with a tone of voice which expressed the deepest trouble of mind, uttered these words—'You see, my dear friend, that both mistress and maid are alike incorrigible. What now remains for me to do, either to preserve my family from disgrace, or this degenerate girl from everlasting ruin?' The other, who doubtless con-

demned

depended Melanthe more in his heart than he would let her father know he did, could find nothing to say in her defence; but that he hoped, when the first confusion of this discovery was a little over, she would be brought to reason; and therefore intreated he would allow her some time to recollect herself. As the conversation now began to consist only of railings on the one side, and persuasions to moderation on the other, I easily perceived that nothing of importance would be the result; so resolved to leave the two old gentlemen together, and accordingly took the first opportunity to get out of the house.

C H A P. VIII.

PRESENTS SOMETHING WHICH, IF THE AUTHOR'S HOPES DO NOT DECEIVE HIM, WILL AFFORD AN EQUAL SHARE OF SATISFACTION AS SURPRIZE.

BEING very anxious for the situation of poor Melanthe, I fully designed to make another visit to Murcio's house early the next morning; and accordingly got to Murcio's door just as Conrade had alighted from his coach, and was stepping in; so I had an easy access, and followed him up into the dining-room, where Murcio was then sitting, and expressed the satisfaction he took in seeing him in words to this effect—

Murcio. My dear friend, I am glad you are come to give me your opinion in a thing I am about to do. My ungracious daughter has given me no answer, made me no submissions. I cannot keep her in my house; and if I turn her out of it, am in danger of having my whole family scandalized by her behaviour: I am therefore resolved to send her to Cornwall, where I have a near kinsman.

Conrade. I flatter myself, Sir, that the intelligence I bring will save you that trouble, and the young lady so long a journey. I have discovered her favourite lover.

Murcio. Is it possible! For Heaven's sake, who—what is he!

Conrade. One you little suspect, though I have seen him often here. It is Dorimon.

Murcio. Dorimon! Yes, since his re-

turn from his travels, he visits here sometimes. His sister Florimel and Melanthe were brought up together at the boarding-school; and, since they left it, have scarcely been two days asunder. But I cannot think Dorimon has been her seducer: she is neither above his hopes, nor below his expectations. If he had any inclinations towards her, I know of nothing should hinder him from making his honourable addresses. But what grounds have you for such a supposition?

Conrade. You shall hear. You know I told you that I did not see his face; but, as I followed him a good part of the street, I took notice of his habit, which indeed had somewhat particular in it, and would have attracted my observation, had I seen it on any other person. It was a dark olive-coloured French barragon, laced with a very rich Point d'Espagne down the seams; he had also a fine flaxen wig, with a bag and a solitaire of an uncommon dimension. I then took him either for a foreigner, or one lately come from abroad. In the same dress, and as exactly as I saw him then, did I see him, within this half hour, at the chocolate-house. I cannot, indeed, swear to the man, but I think may safely to the cloaths, especially as I heard him say, on some gentlemen's praising the suit, and telling him they believed there was not such another in England, that he was pretty sure there was not; for he had bespoke it at Paris, according to his own taste, and it had not been come over long enough for any one to take a pattern by it.

Murcio. I must own there is a strong probability in what you say; but yet, without a certainty, know not what measures I can pursue.

Conrade. If you will take my advice, send for him: I heard him say he should dine at home, so is scarcely gone out. Give some distant hints, at first, concerning a marriage with your daughter; and, according to the answers he makes, you will be instructed how to proceed.

Murcio. It shall be so. I will not let him see I have any suspicion of my daughter's fault; and, whether there be any thing between them or not, a proposal of the nature you mention cannot seem strange to him, as our families have always lived together in a perfect harmony and good understanding.

He had no sooner said this, than he

called a servant, and sent him with his compliments to Dorimon, to let him know he desired to speak with him immediately, if not otherwise engaged. After this, the two friends had some farther discourse concerning what steps the father of Melanthe should take in this affair; when the fellow who had been sent on the above message returned, and told his master that Dorimon said he would not fail doing himself the honour of obeying his commands in a few minutes: on which Conrade took his leave; and Murcio sat down, endeavouring to frame his temper and countenance so as to be suitable to the business he had in hand.

Dorimon appeared in a short time; and, the first compliments being past, Murcio began to open what he had to say, by telling him that he had a great regard for his family; that he was a fine young gentleman; and that, being now five and twenty, he much wondered that he had not heard of his addressing some lady on the score of marriage. To which Dorimon replied, that marriage was a thing he had not as yet much thought upon; and that, having a sister who took care of his house, a wife was the less necessary to him. Murcio then demanded if he found any aversion in himself to changing his condition in favour of a woman of equal birth and fortune, and who would approve of his pretensions. Dorimon seemed a little surprized at these interrogatories; but answered in the negative, with this proviso, that the person of the lady were equally agreeable. Murcio, thinking this reply a proper cue for explaining himself, did so in the following manner—

Murcio. What think you, then, of my daughter Melanthe?

Dorimon. As of an angel, Sir, above my hopes.

Murcio. No fine speeches, Dorimon; deal sincerely with me. Do you like her well enough to marry her?

Dorimon. Yes, Sir, upon my soul! and should bless the hand that gave her to me.

Murcio. Sir, I take you at your word; and give you mine that you shall have her, and six thousand pounds, if you think that a sufficient dower.

Dorimon. I do, Sir; and, though Melanthe is a sufficient fortune of herself, shall accept your offer, and make a settlement accordingly.

Murcio. Then there remains no more than to get the marriage-articles drawn which, if you please, shall be to-morrow morning.

Dorimon. It cannot be too soon. But, Sir, may I not have leave to see her, to throw myself at her feet, and be assured she will not regret the happiness you bestow upon me?

Murcio. Oh, Sir, you have nothing to apprehend on that account; for, to be plain with you, I designed her for another. She rejected the proposal, for which she has been under some disgrace: but, as I have since discovered her disobedience was occasioned by the affection she has for you, I was the more easily induced to pardon it. She does not yet know that I consent to gratify her inclinations; but you shall have the pleasure of telling her yourself.

He then went to the door, and ordered a servant to bid Melanthe come down; after which he turned back, and said to Dorimon—‘My daughter will wait on you presently. I know you will excuse my leaving you together: I have business calls me abroad; but expect to see you to-morrow morning, and shall have a lawyer here.’ He said no more; but went hastily away, to avoid seeing his daughter. He had not left the room above half a minute, before Melanthe entered, but with a confusion impossible to be expressed. She had expected no other, on being called down, than to meet some terrible effects of her father’s displeasure. Her eyes, red with tears, were now cast down upon the floor, as she advanced with slow and trembling steps; nor saw she who was there, till Dorimon sprung forward, and took her by the hand with these words—

Dorimon. Charming Melanthe, how am I transported at the goodness of your father! How incapable of expressing my gratitude for the permission he has just now given me of telling you how much, how truly I adore you!

Melanthe. Bless me, Dorimon, what is the meaning of all this! Where is my father?

Dorimon. Gone, to give me the happy opportunity of endeavouring to inspire you with sentiments in favour of my passion, and conformable to his will.

Melanthe. Your passion, and his will! Certainly, Dorimon, you must either be mad, or I not in my senses! For Heaven’s sake, explain this mystery!

He was going to reply, when his sister Florimel came tripping in. That young lady having been informed by Molly of all that had passed at Murcio's house, was extremely impatient to know how her fair friend behaved afterwards on that occasion. Melanthe no sooner saw her, than she flew into her arms, and cried—

Melanthe. My dear, dear Florimel, what would I not have given to have seen you last night!

Florimel. I was no less eager to be with you. But I find things have quite changed their face. I met your father at the door as I entered; the old gentleman seems to be in quite good humour, desired me to walk up, and told me I should find you and my brother together.

Dorimon. Aye, my dear sister, we are together; and, I hope, shall soon be joined to separate no more.

Florimel. Separate no more! As how?

Dorimon. By the indissoluble ties of marriage. Murcio, the generous Murcio, has bestowed her on me. Tomorrow the articles are to be drawn, and there will then be nothing wanting but my angel's consent for the consummation of my bliss.

Florimel. And was this the business on which he sent for you in such haste?

Dorimon. The same.

Here Florimel burst into so violent a fit of laughter, as rendered her unable to speak for some time. In vain Dorimon asked several times over the cause of this extravagant mirth; and it was but by degrees she recovered herself enough to make this reply—

Florimel. I have found out the riddle! It was I, brother, that have made this match. Yes, with the assistance of that suit of cloaths you have on.

Then addressing herself to Melanthe, proceeded thus—'You must know, my dear, that it was Conrade himself that watched me coming out of your house. I saw him stand perdu under Sir Thomas *****'s porch. He has certainly seen my brother in these cloaths; and, mistaking him for me, has passed him upon your father for your supposed gallant. Dorimon was now as much confounded, in his turn, as the two ladies had been in theirs; till his sister, having first obtained Melanthe's leave, related to him the whole

history of their contrivance to break the match with Conrade. This repetition occasioned some pleasantry between the brother and sister; but Melanthe was too much ashamed to bear any great part in it. Her new lover observing her seriousness, spoke in this manner—

Dorimon. I have got nothing, Florimel, by the account you have given, but the mortification of that vanity Murcio had inspired me with; and dare not now flatter myself that Melanthe will so readily, as I once hoped, acquiesce in the agreement made between us.

Florimel. If she does not, all will come out; and if so, Murcio will certainly return to his first engagement to give her to Conrade. What say you, Melanthe; have you aversion enough for my brother to run so great a risque?

This demand made Melanthe blush excessively. She paused, and hung down her head; but at last made this return—'So sudden a change in my fortune might well excuse me from giving a direct answer to such a question. Of this, however, you may be assured, that I have not courage to disobey my father a second time; and that I love the sister too well to have any aversion to the brother.'

On this Dorimon kissed her hand with a great deal of warmth, and said many tender and passionate things to her; which, as the reader will easily conceive, I think it needless to repeat; and shall only add that, between the brother and the sister, Melanthe was at last prevailed upon to confess, that it would be without the least reluctance she should obey her father in the choice he had now made for her. Though there was now little cause to apprehend any disappointment in these nuptials, yet I resolved to see the thing fully concluded on; accordingly I went the next morning to Murcio's house, where I found him very busy with his lawyer. Dorimon came in soon after; and the writings were presently filled up, signed, sealed, and duly executed, by both parties: and the lawyer had no sooner left the room, than Murcio spoke to Dorimon in these terms—

Murcio. Well, Dorimon, I think there is nothing now wanting for the making you my son, except the ceremony of the church; and I don't care how soon that also was performed. I do

do not love to see affairs of this nature kept long in hand. Besides, you must know, that on my daughter's refusing to marry the person I first proposed to her, I swore in my passion that I would never see her face again till she was a wife.

Dorimon. You may be assured, Sir, I shall think every moment an age; and I do not doubt but the knowledge of the vow you have made will very much expedite my wishes.

Murcio. I am going directly to my little country-seat, and shall leave you to consult with her about the day; but will write to the rector of ****, who is my kinsman, and desire he will perform the office: when that is over, would have you both come down to ***** where you may depend upon meeting with a fatherly reception.

Nothing farther, of any consequence, was said by either of them. *Murcio* took coach for the country, and *Dorimon* went to the apartment of his mistress; where strenuously pressing her for the speedy consummation of his happiness, her father's pretended vow served as an excuse for her compliance, and she consented that the wedding should be the next Sunday after. No accident retarded the fulfilling this agreement, and they were married on the day appointed; after which they set out, accompanied by *Florimel*, for ***** to receive the blessing *Murcio* had promised to bestow upon them. As no one of the company had any reason to be discontented at what had happened, it is not to be doubted but the goddess of cheerfulness accompanied them in their little journey: I say journey, because the sister of *Dorimon* having an aversion to the water, they went in a landau, in complaisance to her; but the subject of their conversation is not in my power to relate, as I had no opportunity of being witness of it.

C H A P. IX.

CONTAINS A SUCCINCT ACCOUNT OF SOME FARTHER PARTICULARS, IN SOME MEASURE RELATIVE TO THE FOREGOING ADVENTURE.

HAVING married my two new-made lovers, the reader will possibly imagine, that the last act of the

play is ended, and that I should now drop the curtain, to prepare for some fresh subject of entertainment; but he must wait awhile; I have not yet done with any of my characters; and besides, as there are many things which seem to require a farther explanation, I cannot think of parting with my favourite *Florimel*, without giving her those just praises which her wit and good-humour may justly claim. It is not unlikely, indeed, but that there may be some over-scrupulous ladies in the world, who will be so far from approving the character of this charming girl, that they will highly condemn her for assuming the air and habit of a man, though for never so short a space of time; and even rail at *Melanthe*, for consenting to put in execution the stratagem she had contrived for her deliverance from an evil so justly dreaded by her. Such as these will certainly think I have said enough, if not too much, on the occasion; and perhaps throw aside the book, and cry they will read no farther. Well, be it so; the loss will be entirely their own: I am pretty confident neither my reputation, nor the profits of my publisher, will suffer by their ill-nature in this point. It is for the entertainment of the gay, the witty, and truly virtuous—who, by the way, are never censorious—that these lucubrations are chiefly intended; and if I am so fortunate as to please them, should give myself no great pain what may be said of me by those of the above-mentioned class. In defiance, therefore, of these fair, or rather unfair critics, I shall proceed in what I have farther to relate concerning the principal subjects of this narrative.

On their arrival at ***** they were received by *Murcio* with a shew of the greatest satisfaction; yet I, who took care to be there before them, in order to be witness of what should pass at this first interview, could easily perceive that he embraced his son-in-law with more cordiality and less constraint than he did his daughter. The remembrance of her supposed fault doubtless rendered him unable to treat her with his accustomed tenderness: he scarce touched her cheek in saluting her; and when he gave her his blessing, added—'Pray Heaven your future conduct may deserve it!' It could not be otherwise, but that all the company must comprehend the full meaning of these words; but poor *Melanthe*

lanthe was so much affected by them, that she burst into a flood of tears; and throwing herself a second time at her father's feet, addressed him in these pathetic terms—

Melanthe. Oh, Sir, I beg, I beseech you, by all the love you once had for me, to forgive the only act of disobedience I was ever guilty of; pardon but the aversion I had to the match you first proposed to me, and you will easily absolve the rest.

Dorimon. Yes, Sir, my dear, my charming wife, is as innocent of every thing that can deserve your blame, as I am from even the most distant wish of violating her purity, or dishonouring your family.

Florimel. Aye, aye, it is poor me that am alone in fault; but, since the mischief I have done has been productive of so much good, I scarce doubt of being excused by a gentleman of so much good sense as Murcio. I have delivered your daughter, Sir, by my contrivance, from the horrors of a forced marriage; I have procured a wife for my brother, with whom, if he is not the most happy, I am certain he deserves to be the most miserable, of all mankind; and I have got you a son-in-law, who I hope will merit that honour by his future behaviour.

Murcio, who could not form even the most distant guess at the meaning of all this, looked sometimes on the one, and sometimes on the other, with all the tokens of the utmost amazement, without being able to speak one syllable; which gave Florimel the opportunity of unravelling the whole mystery of the affair, as she had before promised Melanthe to take upon herself to do. In spite of the little resentment Murcio at first conceived for the trick that had been put upon him, he could not forbear smiling at the invention of the contriver; and the wit and spirit with which that young lady talked to him upon it, very much contributed to bring him into good humour: but that which entirely reconciled him to the wedded pair was, the consideration that Dorimon was wholly ignorant of the plot till after the marriage was concluded; and the assurance Melanthe gave him, that she was far from any intention to deceive him, but had flattered herself with the hope that Conrade would have

broke the engagement without mentioning to him the reasons he had for doing so. Though to have married his daughter to Conrade would have saved him six thousand pounds, yet the many ill consequences which would probably have attended so disproportionate a match, now occurring to his mind, which before he had not thought upon, made him not only contented, but rejoiced, that this change of hands had happened; and he could not forbear kissing and hugging Florimel for being the chief author of it.

Every one now endeavouring to outvie the other in giving testimonies of his good-humour, among the many gay and gallant things said by Dorimon on this occasion, he protested to keep his French cloaths as long as he lived, for a perpetual memento of the good they had done for him, and never wear them but on the anniversary of that happy day which gave his dear Melanthe to his arms. On falling afterwards into some discourse concerning the oddness of the accident which had brought about a marriage so little thought of by either of the parties, yet so agreeable to both, as well as to their friends, Murcio expressed himself in this manner—

Murcio. I cannot help thinking that there is something peculiarly remarkable in this transaction, and looks as if the hand of Heaven had directed the accomplishment.

Florimel. I dare almost engage my own life for the mutual happiness of theirs. Their humours are so exactly suited to each other, that neither of them are fit for any body else; and, now I consider on it, am amazed that, in the long acquaintance they had together, this business never came into either of their heads till chance put it there.

Dorimon. Nay, sister, I am now convinced, by the transport and the pleasing flutter at my heart, on the offer Murcio made of his daughter, that I was then passionately in love with her, though without knowing it.

Melanthe. And if you had been as indifferent to me, as I then thought you were, I should not certainly have been so soon and so easily persuaded to be yours.

Murcio. Well, all things have happened for the best; and there is nothing now wanting to complete my satisfaction.

tion, but the clearing up Melanthe's innocence to Conrade. I should be glad he were here.

The word was scarce out of his mouth, when a servant came into the room, and informed him, that the person he had mentioned was below; on which he ordered he should be immediately introduced. The old gentleman, who had heard nothing of what had happened, nor seen Murcio since the conversation with him, repeated in a former chapter, had been impatient to know the success of his proposal to Dorimon; and finding he did not return to town as usual, made him this visit at *****, in order to gratify his curiosity. He had not advanced above half way into the room, when Murcio presented the bride and bridegroom to him; and told him he had been just wishing for him to congratulate the nuptials. Conrade endeavoured to compose himself enough to salute them with the accustomed forms; but as he had not in his heart believed that Dorimon would be prevailed upon to marry Melanthe, though he had advised her father to make the experiment, was so much surprized on finding the affair concluded, that he could not forbear testifying it in his looks, as well as by crying out—

Conrade. What, married!

Florimel. Yes, Sir, they are married: the indissoluble knot is tied; for which all due thanks be given to your fortunate mistake.

Conrade. My mistake, Madam! Pardon me, if I do not comprehend your meaning.

Dorimon. I believe you do not, Sir: yet it is to your mistaking another for me, that I am indebted for being put in possession of a happiness which otherwise I must have solicited for a long series of time, and perhaps at last never have obtained. I do assure you, Sir, I never presumed to entertain one wish to the dishonour of Melanthe; and was sleeping in my own bed when you imagined me just risen from her arms.

Murcio. He tells you nothing but the truth. He is innocent, so is Melanthe. But here stands her gallant; here is the author of this enigma.

In concluding these words, which he had uttered with the most cheerful air, he patted Florimel upon her cheek, and gently pushed her towards Conrade: but that gentleman was now in such a

consternation, that he scarce knew where he was, much less had the power of distinguishing the sense of any thing he either saw or heard; till Florimel related to him, in her sprightly fashion, every particular of that stratagem which had occasioned the breaking off the intended match between him and Melanthe. Murcio also, and Dorimon, averring the truth of what she said, he began at last to see clearly into the whole affair; after which Melanthe, with a great deal of modesty and sweetness, addressed herself to him in these terms—

Melanthe. I hope, Sir, you will pardon the deception put upon you, as I was constrained to pursue so extraordinary a method, to avoid a thing which, in the end, must have been no less disagreeable to you than to myself. I shall always acknowledge my obligation to the generous offer your affection made: but love, Sir, is not in our power; if it were, my gratitude to you, the consideration of my own interest, and the duty owing to my father, would certainly have inspired me with it.

Conrade. Say no more, sweet lady. I am ashamed of my past folly; and only wish you would exert all the influence you have over your witty she-gallant, not to expose this story in print. I should be sorry, methinks, to see myself in a novel or play.

Florimel. No, no, Sir; you need be under no apprehensions on that score. I would not, for my own sake, have the world know I put on breeches; lest my husband, when I get one, should be afraid I would attempt to wear them afterwards.

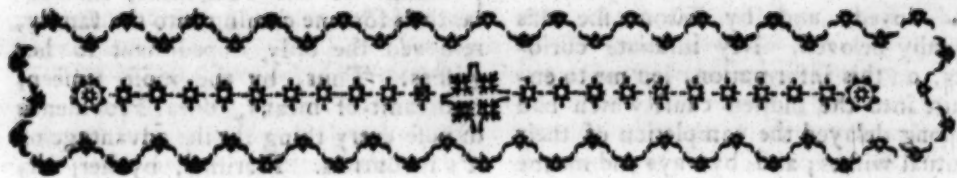
This reply of Florimel's set the whole company into a fit of laughter, and would doubtless have been the occasion of many pleasant repartees, if the butler had not that instant given them a summons to the next room, where was a table elegantly spread with every thing suitable to the season. But, as I could not partake of any of the delicacies I saw before me, I thought it best to leave the house; so accordingly I slipped out, plucked off my belt, went into a boat, and ordered the waterman to row as fast as possible to London; where being arrived, I contented myself with such fare as my own homely board afforded. Not many weeks had this adventure elapsed, before I heard that Florimel was married to a young gentleman

gentleman whom for several years she had loved, and by whom she was equally beloved. My insatiate curiosity, on this information, led me to enquire into the hidden cause which had so long delayed the completion of their mutual wishes; and, by ways and means too tedious to be here inserted, I at last discovered it to be such as attracted my highest esteem and admiration.

Dorimon had been a little extravagant in his equipage and way of living while on his travels. Her whole fortune lay in his hands; and if called out, which in all probability would have been the case if she had married, he must have been obliged to mortgage some part of his estate for the payment. It was therefore to save her brother from so great an inconvenience, that this generous young lady had been deaf to all the sollicitations of a beloved lover, and the soft

pleadings of her own heart, till Melanthe's fortune coming into the family, removed the only impediment to her wishes. Thus, by the most unseen, undreamt-of means, does Providence dispose every thing for the advantage of its favourites. Florimel, by her wit, and contrivance to serve her fair friend, without proposing the least interest to herself, or even imagining she could have any, not only brought about her brother's happiness, but met her own reward, in the accomplishment of her felicity. These two families live together in the most perfect harmony; and Murcio, who is little less fond of Florimel than of his own daughter, passes most of his time among them. Conrade also is extremely intimate with both; insomuch that it is thought he will, at his decease, divide a good part of his large fortune between them.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.



THE
INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

IS A KIND OF WARNING-BELL TO THE PUBLICK, AND GIVES A MELANCHOLY, THOUGH TOO COMMON PROOF, THAT A PERSON IN ENDEAVOURING, BY UNJUST OR IMPRUDENT MEASURES, TO AVOID FALLING INTO AN IMAGINARY MISFORTUNE, IS FREQUENTLY LIABLE TO BRING ON EFFECTUALLY WHAT MIGHT OTHERWISE NEVER HAVE HAPPENED.



F all the passions which distract the human mind, there is none more pernicious in it's quality, nor more dreadful in it's consequences, than jealousy. It is looked upon, indeed, as the most certain proof of a strong and violent affection; yet it is such a proof as no one would wish to experience, as it infallibly involves the beloved object in a variety of disquiets, whether innocent or guilty: nor is the person possessed of this raging fury less wretched; so just are these words of Mr. Dryden—

' O jealousy ! thou raging ill,
' Why hast thou found a place in lover's
' hearts ?
' Afflicting what thou canst not kill,
' And poisoning Love himself with his own
' darts.'

And as the inimitable Shakespear
yet more emphatically, in my opinion,
expresses it—

' O what damn'd minutes tells he o'er,
' Whodoats, yetdoubts; suspects, yet strong-
' ly loves !'

But as jealousy frequently takes possession of the soul by almost imperceptible degrees, the following little narrative may serve as an antidote against it's poison; and warn every one, married persons especially, not to give way to it's first attacks, lest it should be in time wholly subdued by it.

Cleora had from her very infancy been promised in marriage to the son of a neighbouring gentleman, about three years older than herself. An inclination for her intended husband grew up with her years; nor was his affection less tender for her, whom he expected would one day be his wife: but when the innocent

nocent pair became ripe for the consummation of their mutual wishes, an unhappy dispute happened between their parents, which entirely broke off the match at once, and they were forbid to see each other any more. As I was not at that time acquainted with either of the lovers, I cannot pretend to describe what their young hearts sustained in this cruel separation: it was doubtless very grievous to them both at first; but absence, and variety of amusements, provided for them by their respective parents, in order to dissipate their chagrin, by degrees wrought the desired effects. Leander, for so he was called, grew one of the gayest men about the town; and Cleora was so far weaned from the remembrance of him, that she obeyed her father without reluctance in receiving the addresses of Aristus; who, after the necessary forms of courtship, became her husband.

Few nuptials gave a greater promise of felicity. The births, the fortunes, of the wedded pair, were equal; their ages perfectly agreeable: she was not quite nineteen, and he no more than five and twenty; she was a very lovely woman, he a most graceful man. He had adored her to so romantick a height, that it was thought, if he had not obtained her, a dagger or a bowl of poison must have been his fate. She treated him with all the tenderness that could be expected from a virtuous woman by a reasonable man. They were, in the first months of their marriage, the envy and admiration of as many as knew them. But, alas! how uncertain is the date of human happiness! When Heaven is not pleased to bestow on us a contented mind; I mean, when we do not ask that blessing, and endeavour to acquire it; in vain indulgent Fortune lavishes her whole stock of bounties on us; we re-pine amidst our plenty, enjoy nothing we possess, and are wretches because we will be so.

The bridal house, so lately the theatre of joy and pleasure, soon became the cell of gloomy sullenness and black despair. The eyes of the beautiful Cleora were frequently seen red with weeping: she ceased to appear at any publick place, and received very little company at home; while on the brow of the once cheerful, gay Aristus, now loured a heavy melancholy, and all the indications of a deep inward grief. Every

one saw the change, but none could presently discern the cause: it could not, however, long be kept a secret; the servants who waited immediately on their persons were the first who discovered it; these reported it to the others, and they failed not to whisper it to as many as they were acquainted with—that their master was prodigiously jealous of his lady.

The first tokens he gave of this frenzy, as I have been since informed, was to debar Cleora from going to the opera, the play, the masquerade, and all routs and assemblies; all which places she had been accustomed to frequent. She obeyed him, notwithstanding, without murmuring or repining; and told him, with a great deal of sweetness, that if those diversions were infinitely dearer to her than ever they had been, she would readily sacrifice all the pleasure she took in them to that of testifying her love and duty to him. Not contented with this, he proceeded farther, and forbade her to make any visits without him, except to his mother, who lived but in the next street; and then to let him know, that he might meet her there, and bring her home. Hard as this injunction seemed to her, she complied with it; being resolved, if possible, to chace from his mind all those ideas she found he had conceived in prejudice of her discretion, and convince him that she regarded nothing so much as his satisfaction.

What more could woman do, or man expect? yet all was not enough to make this jealous husband easy. Whenever they were abroad together, if any gentleman happened to be in company, the least gallant thing said to her, or complaisance returned to it by her, immediately set the worm within his brain a madding, and made him, on their coming home, reproach her in terms very unbecoming in him to make use of, and difficult for her to bear with patience: yet, nevertheless, he still loved her, loved her to an excess; but, as the poet says—

‘No signs of love in jealous men remain,
‘But that which sick men have of life,
‘their pain.’

This behaviour of Aristus engrossed much of the conversation of the town, and various were the conjectures passed

upon it. Some highly blamed him; others were apt to imagine there had really been some imprudences on the part of Cleora; and not a few there were among her own sex, who, hating her for those very perfections which ought to have excited their esteem, scrupled not to pronounce her guilty of every thing she could be suspected of.

Much was this lady to be pitied. Deprived of all those pleasures to which her youth had been accustomed, ill-treated by her husband, censured by her acquaintance, and secluded from the society of those who might have found means of diverting, if not wholly dissipating her melancholy. To add to her misfortunes, she had no friend near her to whom she might complain. Her father, being a widower, had broke up house-keeping soon after her marriage, and was retired, with an intent to pass the remainder of his days with her elder sister, who was settled in a far distant county; so that the only person from whom she received any consolation was Miss Lucia, the sister of Aristus, a young lady of great good-nature, and who believing her truly innocent, used her utmost endeavours to put all chimeras to her prejudice out of her brother's head.

The discourses which continually filled my ears about this family, and the different opinions the world had of the manner of their living together, made me resolve to have recourse to my Invisibility, in order to discover which was in the right. Accordingly, I went one day, equipped as usual, with my Belt and Tablet, to make a visit at their house. Aristus was abroad; but I found Cleora, sitting in a very pensive posture, in her dressing-room. I had not been there above two minutes, before her footman came in, and presented her with a letter, which he told her was left for her by a porter, who said it required no answer, and was gone.

I must confess that, on hearing this, I was guilty of great injustice to Cleora, and began to be apprehensive that her husband's suspicions were founded on too solid reasons; but I was soon ashamed of my rash judgment, when, slipping behind her chair, and looking over her shoulder as she read, I perceived the letter was from Miss Lucia, and contained these lines—

‘DEAR SISTER,
‘WORDS cannot express how
‘greatly I am troubled, on
‘finding myself obliged to send this,
‘instead of waiting on you in person.
‘Be assured I love and value your conversation as I ought; and shall no less suffer in being deprived of it,
‘Heaven knows for how long a time, than you will do in the knowledge of the cause. Some idle stories, of which, I dare believe, my brother's unhappy caprice has been the sole occasion, have reached the ears of my mamma, and made her think it improper for me to be seen with you, while the world continues to judge of you in the manner it does at present. She heard of your message to me, and strictly forbade me to obey the summons. You know too well, my dear Cleora, what duty is owing from a child to a parent, and also how much my father's will has left me in her power, to resent the painful proof I now give of my obedience to her. I wish, for my own sake, as well as yours, that she, my brother, and every one that knows us, were as well convinced as myself of your perfect innocence; but, till that happy time arrives, must content myself with the memory of the many happy hours we have passed together, and the hopes of many more yet to come, when once the horrid cloud which now separates us is removed. Farewel! That Heaven may send you comfort under your present affliction, and speedily relieve you from it, shall be the constant prayers of her who is, with the greatest sincerity, your most affectionate sister,
‘LUCIA.’

Scarce had she gone through half this epistle, before her countenance betrayed the effect it produced. Disdain, rage, grief, seemed now to have united all their force to raise a tempest in her mind; which immediately broke forth in these and the like exclamations—
‘Deprived of my poor Lucia, too, and on so shocking a pretence! Good Heaven! for what unknown crime of mine, or of my ancestors, am I linked into such a family! Mother and son alike unjust, ungrateful, base, tyrannick! Have I renounced all the gay amusements of life, submitted my temper to the

' the will of an imperious husband, and
' made it my whole study to oblige him,
' to meet at last with this ungenerous,
' this barbarous return! My virtue sus-
' pected, my reputation traduced, and
' my conversation shunned as a dis-
' grace! Oh, 'tis too much—too much
' for human patience to sustain!"

Many other expressions of the same nature did her passion vent; till, at last, recollecting the request Lucia had made in the postscript of her letter, she snatched it hastily from off her toilet, and thrust it into the fire; saying, at the same time, ' Poor Lucia, however, must not suffer ' for her friendship to me.'

Aristus being returned home, was that instant coming up stairs; which being opposite to the room where Cleora was, and the door open, he had an opportunity of seeing this last action, though not of hearing the words which accompanied it. He flew like lightning to the chimney, in order to save the paper, not doubting but it contained something that might add fresh fuel to his jealousy; but, nimble as he was, the flames were yet more quick, and left not the least part of what he so much wanted unconsumed. This disappointment, joined with what he had seen Cleora do, so much inflamed him, that looking on her with eyes sparkling with indignation, he saluted her with this reproach—

Aristus. I perceive, Madam, you will be still too cunning for me. Had I come a moment sooner, I might, perhaps, have discovered enough in that paper, to have silenced all your future boastings of virtue and fidelity.

Cleora. Oh, Sir, you need be under no apprehensions on that score. The continuance of your base suspicions deserve not that I should be at any pains to undeceive you.

Aristus. No, 'twould be in vain: too well I know you. Nor can you, dare you, now attempt to justify yourself, after the glaring proof I have received of your infidelity.

Cleora. What proof?

Aristus. That paper, perfidious woman!—that paper, whose ashes, could they speak, would rise up in judgment against you.

Cleora. This is madness, or some new pretext to use me ill. Pray, what can the most injurious of your imagina-

tions suggest on the burning of a bit of paper?

Aristus. Did I not observe your countenance while throwing the lewd scrawl into the fire? Did not your gloating eyes pursue it as you would the fellow from whom it came? Were not all the marks of guilt and confusion on your cheeks on my approach? But this is not all; I was told below that you had just received a letter by a porter. Answer to that, thou hypocrite! Does it become a married woman, of your rank and circumstances, to receive letters, brought by such messengers?

Cleora. A married woman! say rather a married wretch! for such are all who have husbands like Aristus.

Aristus. Still you evade the question; but, if you would not deserve to be the wretch you call yourself, be once sincere, and tell me from which of your pretended admirers that letter came.

Cleora. From none.

Aristus. Perhaps, then, some female agents, some sly promoters of your amorous intrigues. But no equivocations: explain the whole, or, by Heaven, my sword—

Cleora. Do! kill me! it is the only act of kindness you can shew, and all I now wish to receive from you.

Aristus. So daring in your crimes, abandoned creature! But get out of my sight this moment, lest I be indeed provoked to do a deed I might hereafter repent of.

Cleora. Monster!—But to quit your presence is a command I shall always be ready to obey.

It was with an unspeakable haughtiness that Cleora uttered these words as she flung out of the room. I am apt to believe, by the amazement Aristus now appeared in, that this was the first time she had ever testified any great marks of resentment for his ill treatment of her. He stood for some moments in a profound reverie; and, when he came out of it, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, saying—' Good! God! nothing ' but the most perfect innocence, or the ' most consummate guilt, could inspire ' a woman with so much boldness. ' I know not what to think.' Then folding his arms, again seemed lost in meditation; which having indulged a while, the subject of it burst out in these words—' If she were innocent, where-
' fore

fore should she conceal from me the contents of that cursed letter? No, 'tis too plain she is guilty. In vain would my fond heart, that still doats on her, find excuses for her behaviour. Yet it would be some ease to be convinced: but it is impossible; she has too much art. How true, O Dryden, are thy words—

“ False women to new joys unseen can
“ move;

“ There are no prints left in the paths of
“ love.

“ All other goods by publick marks are
“ known;

“ But this, we most desire to keep, has
“ none.”

After this, he walked several times backwards and forwards in the room, then ran hastily down stairs, as I imagined, in search of Cleora; but finding he did not, and went out of the house, I also left it too, having an engagement of my own that evening.

CHAP. II.

IN WHICH THE READER IS REQUESTED TO EXPECT NO MORE THAN A CONTINUATION OF THE SAME NARRATIVE BEGUN IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

THE distress in which I left Cleora, and the knowledge I now had of her innocence, very much affected me; and I must either have changed my nature, or have lost that happy gift of Invisibility which enabled me to discover almost every thing, not to have flown the next morning to the house of Aristus, in order to inform myself what effects the conversation of the preceding night had produced. I truly pitied the unhappy pair: for though Aristus was unjust and cruel in his suspicions, yet I plainly saw he suffered no less in his own mind than what he inflicted on his much-injured wife; especially when I reflected that he was not guilty through a want of affection for her, but a too violent excess of it; as is observed by one of our best English poets—

“ The greater care the higher passion shews,
“ We hold that dearest we most fear to
“ lose.”

Indeed I soon found, how much more than I could even have imagined this offending husband deserved my commiseration. He was abroad, and Cleora not yet risen from her bed, when I made my visit; which, as near as I can remember, was somewhat past eleven o'clock. Resolved, however, not to lose my labour entirely, I had recourse for intelligence to the tatlers of the kitchen; whom, according to my wish, I found busy in discourse on the very point I wanted. Some took the part of their master, some of their lady: and, upon the whole, I found, that a second quarrel having ensued after Aristus came home, Cleora had refused either to sup or sleep with him, but lay in a bed she had ordered to be prepared for her in another room; on which he went not to his own, but had continued the whole night walking about the house, and behaved like a man totally deprived of reason; and that, when morning came, he went out.

On a sudden, hearing the footman say that his master knocked at the street-door, I followed as fast as I could; being more curious to see how Aristus would behave, than to hear what would be the issue of the contest between the servants. Accordingly I got close in the corner of an arch while he passed by, and could see nothing in his countenance of that ferocity the servants had been describing; on the contrary, a perfect composure seemed to me to sit upon all his features, and left not the least traces of dissatisfaction. I attended him to the chamber which Cleora had made choice of for her repose, if it were possible for her to take any, the preceding night. He knocked gently at the door; but finding it not readily opened, retired, and went into the dining-room; where he called a servant, and bid him seek his wife's waiting-maid, and order her to come immediately to him. The young woman presently appeared; though, I easily discerned, not without some tremor of the nerves; expecting, perhaps, to participate in the effects of her master's displeasure: her countenance, however, grew more assured, when he spoke in the most courteous accents, saying—

Aristus. Is your lady awake yet, Mrs. Betty?

Waiting-maid. Yes, Sir.

Aristus. Then let her know I am ready

ready for breakfast; and ask if she will have the tea served where she is, or in her own dressing-room, as usual.

She said no more; and, after making a low curtsy, went out of the room, very much surprized at this sudden turn; as indeed was I, after what I had seen and heard; nor was able to determine, as yet, whether the extraordinary complaisance he shewed was real or affected. I was soon convinced, however, when the maid returned with this answer to his message—

Waiting-maid. Sir, my lady desires to be excused. She has got a violent head-ache, and begs not to be disturbed.

Aristus. Tell her I bring her news that will make her well. No—hold—I will go myself.

With these last words he flew to the chamber; and, pushing open the door, which was now unlocked, found his wife sitting in a very melancholy and dejected posture. She started up at sight of him; and, without giving him leave to speak, accosted him in these terms—

Cleora. 'Tis hard that no part of a house, of which I am flattered with the name of mistress, can protect me from the insults of a man who certainly married me with no other view than to make me miserable.

Aristus. Oh, say not so! I will soon convince you to the contrary; nor shall you ever more have cause to fly the presence of Aristus. I own I have been to blame; have said and done a thousand things that I am ashamed to think of. But why, my dear Cleora, did you raise my passion to that guilty height? Why conceal from me the author and contents of the letter which gave me so much pain?

Cleora. It would be easy for me to justify my refusal.

Aristus. I know it would, my angel; full well I know it would; but I am now let into the secret, without your being guilty of a breach of friendship to oblige me.

Cleora. What is it you mean, Aristus?

Aristus. I have been this morning at my mother's; where, speaking of our unhappy quarrel, and the motive of it, my sister immediately changed countenance; and, after vindicating your conduct with the utmost vehemence, and as

severely condemning mine, confessed that it was herself that had sent that letter to you by a porter, and had desired you to burn it as soon as read.

Cleora. Dear Lucia! Oh that the brother had the sister's temper!

Aristus. Brother and sister are equally devoted to you. If Lucia were Aristus, she would do as Aristus does; and if Aristus were Lucia, he would act like Lucia. The difference of sexes makes all the difference in our sentiments or behaviour. Her's is a tender friendship, mine a raging love; which, while happy in your possession, trembles at even the most distant possibility of ever being less so.

Cleora. Can it be love that suspects my virtue?

Aristus. By Heaven! my cooler moments have never set you down as capable of wronging me, or of dishonouring yourself; but when passion rages in the soul, reason has little government over our thoughts or words. I know I have been much to blame; but, O Cleora! forgive a fault occasioned only by an excess of fondness. So dear I prize you, that I envy the very air that breathes upon your lips; and wish to grow for ever there, and keep out all intruders.

Cleora. But do you consider how wretched this causeless jealousy has made me?

Aristus. Yes, and could tear out my heart for having ever harboured the least unjust suspicion of you; yet have I suffered torments much greater than was in my power to inflict. Could you be sensible of the agonies I felt during this last whole cruel night, you must, you would forgive and pity me.

Cleora. Mine have not been less; yet could I forget all, had my reputation been untouched by your ill-usage. You now know the purport of your sister's letter; and can you think it possible for me to support, with patience, the being looked upon by your kindred as a disgrace to the family I am come among?

Aristus. Think not so, my dear Cleora. My sister was always assured of your innocence, and a strenuous vindicator of every thing you did. My mother never thought worse than that some little inadvertencies in your conduct had wrought me up to the follies I have been guilty of, which she has just now severely

verely chide me for. They will both wait on you this afternoon, and give you all the proofs in their power of the sincere respect and tenderness they have for you.

Cleora. Well, Aristus, if I could be certain that this was the last trial you would make of my good-nature, I might, perhaps, endeavour to think no more on what is past.

Aristus. If ever I fall back into my former errors, despise me, hate me, think me the worst of men. No, be assured I am too much ashamed of what I have been, ever to be the like again; and, as a proof of the perfect confidence I now have in you, henceforward keep what company you please. I shall prescribe no rules for your conduct; I shall leave all to yourself, and be satisfied that all you do is right.

Cleora. I shall take the less liberty for your granting me so much. But, if you should relapse, remember what a certain celebrated author of our sex says on this occasion—

‘ We women to ourselves this justice owe,
‘ That these who think us false, should
‘ find us so.’

She spoke this with so enchanting a smile, that Aristus, though not yet quite sure that what he did would be agreeable, could not forbear catching her in his arms, and holding her for some time locked in the most strict embrace; then letting her loose, and looking on her with the truest tenderness, cried—

Aristus. Do you then forgive me?

Cleora. I do.

With these words, she threw her snowy arms about his neck, and put her face close to his, returning all the endearments he had just before given her; after which, that is, as soon as the transport he was in would give him leave to speak, he said—

Aristus. My for ever adored Cleora, depend upon it, that the whole study of my life shall be to requite this goodness.

Cleora. Treat me but as my actions deserve; I ask no more. But come, let us go to breakfast.

With this they went arm in arm into the next room, where Mrs. Betty and the tea-equipage waited their approach. I now left this once more happy pair to enjoy the sweets of their reconciliation; and, as I doubted not but the contrition

of Aristus would be as lasting, as by many indications I had reason to think it was sincere, expected not that any future events, worthy the attention of an Invisible Spy, would happen to call me to their house again. But, unhappily for the persons concerned in it, a very few days after convinced me how little I was endowed with the spirit of prophecy; and also, that when once the fatal fire of jealousy has got possession of the mind, though it may lie dormant for a while, yet the least wafting of a feather, or even a shadow, is sufficient to give it motion, and kindle the smothered embers into a blaze.

I was loitering one morning in the Park. The air was serene, and not cold, the time of the year considered; for it was then November. Few people being there, I had an opportunity of indulging contemplation with the wonders of nature; which, even in the most barren season, affords matter to attract our admiration; and was almost lost in thought, when I was suddenly roused from it by the appearance of Cleora; who, in a rich, genteel dishabille, came tripping down the walk; and, after looking two or three times round her, seated herself on a bench just opposite to St. James’s House. My surprise to find a lady of her rank alone in that place stopped my farther progress, and engaged me to draw near her, in order to observe whether chance, or any particular motive, had brought her hither. In less time than the taking a pinch of snuff would last, Aristus came as from the palace: he saw his wife at a distance; crossed over, and came to her, saying—

Aristus. What, are you here, my dear, and alone?

Cleora. You see I am; but I did not expect to be picked up by a gentleman this morning. We are well met, however; and, if you have no business that requires haste, should be glad you would give me your company while I stay, which will not be long.

Aristus. With all my heart. I was only going to the coffee-house. And, in return for my complaisance, you shall tell me by what accident I find you here thus unguarded.

Cleora. Can one be unguarded where there are so many soldiers? But, you must know, I have been among the shops at Charing Cross, and made a great many purchases. I chuse to walk over

the Park. I had William with me; but, as I knew the centry would not suffer him to pass through with the things, I sent him home the other way. When I came hither, I found the air so extremely pleasant, that I was tempted to sit down and enjoy a little of it; especially as I found nobody here that I thought would take notice of me. And now you have the whole history of my morning's transactions.

Aristus. A very concise one. But suppose, my dear, you had met with any of the Bucks, the Bloods, or the Buffs, how would you have escaped their attacks?

Cleora. Why, I would have set my arms a-kimbo, and looked as fierce as they. Those sort of squires are never bold but to the fearful.

Finding, by their talking together in this gay manner, that they continued in perfect good-humour with each other, I thought I had no business to be an eves-dropper any longer, and was going to quit the place where I had stood; when, just as I had taken it into my head to do so, two gentlemen came down the walk; one of whom, in passing by the bench, stopped short, looked earnestly at Cleora, started, made a low bow, and then went on. She returned the salute, but with a confusion impossible to be expressed. She blushed; she trembled through every joint; her fan fell out of her hand; and she was ready to sink herself upon the seat. A less observing husband than Aristus must have taken notice of this sudden change; but the alarm it gave his jealous heart, was such as compelled him to be speechless for some moments. Cleora in vain endeavoured to recompose herself; all the efforts she made to suppress or to conceal her agitations, rendered them but the more violent, and consequently the more visible. Aristus, at last, broke silence with these words—

Aristus. You seem disordered, Madam. The sight of these gentlemen has had a strange effect upon you.

Cleora. I was a little surprized at the sight of one of them. But that is not all; I am not well.

Aristus. I see you are not, either in mind or body. My coming was unlucky. Had I been absent, you would doubtless have retained your former gaiety. But this is no place to expatiate on the cause of your disorder: I

will get one of the soldiers to call a chair; 'tis fit you should go home.

He waited not to hear what answer she would make, but rose hastily up, and spoke to one who was not upon duty. The fellow ran to do as he was desired, and presently returned with a chair. While he was gone, Cleora had recovered herself enough to say to Aristus—
'I perceive you are beginning to entertain sentiments to my disadvantage; but have patience till we get home, and I shall easily make this matter clear.' As he was putting her into the chair, she added—'You will follow presently.' To which he replied—'I shall not be long after you; though I believe your own meditations, at this time, will be more agreeable to you than the company of a husband.'

I perceived very plainly, by the countenance of Aristus, that a storm was gathering in his breast, which I doubted not would break forth in thunder. I could not help also being of opinion, that there were some appearances, on the part of Cleora, not much to her advantage. I thought, however, that the best way to form a true judgment of the accidents of that morning, were to see them when they were together; so forbore following either of them, and restrained my impatience till near the hour in which they usually dined, as being the most likely time to find Aristus at home. On my coming to their house, I found the door open, and a footman, in a laced livery, sitting on a bench in the hall, as waiting for an answer to some message he brought. I went directly up to the dining-room; no person being there, I passed on to Cleora's apartment, and found her writing at her bureau. A letter lay open before her, containing these lines—

‘ TO CLEORA.

‘ MADAM,

‘ I heard not of your marriage till some weeks after it was consummated; and when I did, the hurry of my affairs, being then just going to Paris, prevented my congratulating you upon it. I returned to England but three days since; and the first enquiry I made, was concerning your health and place of abode: but the answers I received to these interrogatories were mingled

mingled with some other informations, which make me not quite sure that a visit from me might not give offence to that happy gentleman who is now your husband. I would not therefore take the liberty of waiting on you till I had first received your permission. It is a blessing I ardently long for; but, whether proper for you to grant or not, beg you will believe that I am, with an esteem too justly grounded for change of circumstances to alter, Madam, your most faithfully devoted, and most humble servant,

‘LEANDER.’

The answer given by Cleora to the above billet was as follows—

‘SIR,
‘THAT I still retain a place in your remembrance, demands my grateful acknowledgments; and am sorry to tell you, that it is at this distance only I can pay my thanks. It is easy for me to guess of what nature the informations you mention have been, and think myself obliged so far to confirm the truth of them, as to let you know the favour you intended me is wholly improper for me to receive; and to desire you will attempt no future correspondence of any kind with her who is no longer mistress of her actions, but who must always preserve in her heart the best wishes for your welfare.

‘CLEORA.’

Having sealed this, she called her maid Betty, and bid her deliver it to the man who waited for it; then took up Leander's letter, and read it two or three times over to herself, with very disturbed emotions; after which, she rose hastily from the posture she had been in, whether with a design to burn, or lay it carefully up, I cannot pretend to say, for her husband that instant flew into the room, and snatched it out of her hand. She shrieked; and, in my opinion, very imprudently endeavoured to wrest it from him. His stature, as well as strength, being much superior to hers, he held it at arm's length, and read the contents, in spite of all her weak efforts to hinder it; which done, he clapped it into his pocket, stamped, bit his lips, measured the room with wild unequal paces, still as he

turned darting revengeful glances at the trembling Cleora. These, and other such like frantick gestures, introduced the following dialogue between them—

Cleora. What is there in that letter can have moved you thus?

Aristus. Was it not sent by him whose sight this morning threw you into such disorder?

Cleora. I was a little surprized at the sudden appearance of a person I had not seen for a long time; but know not that the disorder I was in proceeded from that cause.

Aristus. He knew it did, and I suppose sent you this by way of consolation.

Cleora. You put an odd interpretation on his words, as well as on my looks. Is this, Aristus, the effect of all those promises you so lately made?

Aristus. When I made those promises, I was so weak as to believe there was a possibility of your being faithful: but am now convinced of what you are; know that you are the most vile of women, and I the most accursed of men!

Cleora. You make yourself indeed the one, by your unjust suspicions; but no action of mine shall ever prove I am the other.

Aristus. Death and furies! Did I not meet the villain's servant with a letter from you in his hand!

Cleora. Suppose you did. I wrote to forbid his coming hither.

Aristus. Yes, and no doubt to appoint a place more convenient.

Cleora. 'Tis false; nor would the man whom your suspicions wrong me with, harbour a thought to the prejudice either of my virtue or my reputation. No, if you had half his honour, or his love, I should not be the wretch I am.

Aristus. Then you confess he loves you?

Cleora. He loved me once; and though Heaven thought fit to break off our intended union, I believe still preserves an esteem for me.

Aristus. As you for him. Hell and vengeance! Dare you avow this to my face! Have I then only the leavings, the refuse, of a beloved rival! Audacious strumpet!

In speaking this, he struck her so violent a blow over the face, that the blood gushed from her nose and mouth; on which she cried out—‘Villain! there
‘wanted

‘ wanted but this to prove the baseness of thy abject soul! But think not the name of wife shall make me tamely bear such usage; no, if the laws of England should refuse me justice, I will fly to the remotest corner of the earth, and seek refuge among the less barbarous Hottentots, rather than live beneath the roof with such a monster!’

How Aristus would have behaved on this is uncertain; a servant that moment entered the room, and told him that a gentleman, who it seems he had sent for that morning upon business, was now come to wait upon him. Whatever was in the mind of this distracted husband, he had no farther opportunity of shewing it at present; and only giving a furious look at Cleora, and muttering some inarticulate curses between his teeth as he went out, left her to ruminate on what was past. She no sooner found herself alone, than she rung the bell for her maid, who appeared quite frightened on seeing her lady in such a condition. The girl’s exclamations made her turn to the looking-glass; and the injury that had been done her, it is probable, gave strength to her resentment, and she resolved to put in immediate execution what she had threatened Aristus with doing.

Betty had lived with her before her marriage, and was no stranger to the love that had been between her and Leander. The enraged fair-one, therefore, scrupled not to make her the confidant of the motive of this last quarrel with her husband, and the intention she had of quitting him for ever; then, after considering a little in what manner she should manage this affair, gave the following orders—‘ I would have you take a hackney-coach for expedition sake, and go to Mrs. Clip’s the tirewoman: I know she lets lodgings. If she has any apartment ready, hire it directly; but if her house happens to be full, do not return without procuring one for me in some other; for I am determined to go this very day, and shall think every moment an age till I am out of this detested place.’

While the maid was gone, Cleora set about packing up her cloaths and jewels; which she did with such adroitness and dispatch, that in less than an hour every thing belonging to her was ready to be sent away. In a little

more than that time Betty returned, and told her that Mrs. Clip’s first floor being let, she had agreed for the parlours, which she said were very handsome, and she believed her ladyship would approve of, at least till a better apartment could be provided. Cleora was satisfied; another coach was called to carry her, and the maid followed in the other with the luggage. Aristus was all this time abroad: he went out with the gentleman who had called on him, and his absence very much facilitated the execution of his wife’s design; for, had he been at home, ’tis certain that either his love or anger, or perhaps a mixture of both, would have attempted to detain her. But what effects the steps she had taken produced, both on the one and the other, must be left to the succeeding chapter.

CHAP. III.

IN WHICH THE CONSEQUENCES OF CLEORA’S ELOPEMENT ARE FULLY SHEWN, AND AN END PUT TO THAT SUSPENSE WHICH THE FORMER PAGES MAY HAVE EXCITED IN THE MIND OF EVERY INTERESTED AND CURIOUS READER.

I Staid some hours at the house of Aristus, expecting to be witness of something extraordinary in his behaviour, when he should be told of the departure of his wife; but he returning not in all that time, I grew weary of the tedious attendance, and quitted my post in order to go home; for as to Cleora, I had no thoughts of visiting her in her new apartment till next morning. It not being late, however, I took it into my head to call at a great coffee-house in my way, and lucky was it for the gratification of my curiosity that I did so. I found Aristus there; he was sitting at a table, in one corner of the room, some distance from the other company, with paper and a standish before him. I advanced with all the speed I could towards him, and saw him write the following billet to Leander—

‘ SIR.

‘ YOU are a villain, and have endeavoured to wrong me in a point too tender to be forgiven. I

K 2

‘ need

‘ need only tell you that I am the husband of Cleora, to inform you both of what I mean, and what sort of satisfaction my honour demands from you, which I expect you will give me to-morrow morning at seven, in the Artillery Ground, Tothill Fields. The bearer has orders to wait your answer to

‘ ARISTUS.’

This he sent by a porter to the Braund’s Head in Bond Street; at which house, as I afterwards discovered, he had, with a good deal of pains, got intelligence that Leander constantly supped every night. I waited behind Aristus, with an impatience, perhaps, not inferior to his own, to see what reply Leander would make to the above, till the porter returned from him with these lines—

‘ SIR,

‘ **T**HOUGH your telling me that you are the husband of Cleora, cannot make me in the least sensible how I deserve the name of villain, yet I can easily guess at the satisfaction you require, and shall not fail to meet you at the hour and place appointed, in hopes of being better informed for what imaginary cause you treat in this manner a person who neither knows, or ever had any design to injure you.

‘ LEANDER.’

Aristus, after having read this, staid no longer than to drink one dish of coffee. As I perceived he turned that way which led to his own house, I could not forbear accompanying him thither; and I believe, by what I have to relate, the reader will think I had no reason to repent the pains I took. He was no sooner entered, than he asked hastily for his wife, doubtless with an intention to renew his reproaches, and give a vent to some part of the fury he was possessed of: but never certainly did astonishment work a more strange effect. On being told she was gone, and the manner in which she went, the sudden shock at once deprived him both of speech and motion; his face grew pale as ashes; his eyes were fixed in a stupid stare; and had he been buried for three days, scarce could he have appeared more the ghost of what he was the moment be-

fore. His deadened faculties by degrees reviving, the first use he made of them was to call up all the servants; asking first one, and then another, why she was suffered to depart, why they did not stop her. To which they answered, that having no order from him, they durst not presume so far; and besides, they knew nothing of her going till they saw the coaches at the door, and the portmanteaus carried out.

He next demanded to what place she had directed herself to be carried: but both Cleora and her maid having taken the precaution to give no order to the coachman till they were got some distance from the house, no one of them was able to give him any information; on which he sent them out of the room, not without some curses on their indolence in not following the coaches: then, thinking himself alone, began to give a loose to the dictates of his despair and rage in these expressions—‘ Then she is lost, for ever lost to me! for if she should return, my honour, after this, would not permit me to receive her. Why did I ever marry! What demon tempted me to become the husband of a woman whom I knew all mankind must love as well as I! Curse on my fond passion! curse on her fatal charms! Oh the deceiver! the vile hypocrite! There is no longer any room for doubt; her flight has proved her guilt. Revenge is now my sole relief: she for the present has escaped my reach, but I will stab her image in Leander’s heart. Oh that it were morning!’

While uttering the latter part of this exclamation, he flew about the room as if totally bereft of reason; till his spirits, at length exhausted by the violence of his rage, sunk into the contrary extreme, that of dejection: he folded his arms, sighed, and, with tears bursting from his eyes, cried out—‘ Oh Cleora, Cleora! lovely, perfidious wanton, to what hast thou reduced me!’ He then threw himself down on a settee, with groans like those which issue from the breasts of men dying in their full vigour; whence, after having lain some time, he started up, saying—‘ I will think no more! To hear of my distractions would but soothe her pride.’

He seemed now a little more composed, and called for something to eat; but, on it’s being brought, could not put

one morsel into his mouth; so rose from table, and went up to his own chamber; where I did not think fit to pursue him, as having already seen enough to make me know the present disposition of his mind. It was my full intention, however, to go in the morning to the Artillery Ground, to be spectator of the combat between him and Leander; but was disappointed, by sleeping beyond the time they were to meet. This a little vexed me; but I consoled myself with the thoughts of being able to hear the event, by calling some part of the day at the house of Aristus, for I knew not where Leander lived. But my concern for Cleora carrying me first to her lodgings, there I got all the intelligence I wanted. I found that lady, as I believe, just risen from her bed, for she was in a loose entire deshabille. She seemed very pensive, and had the marks of her jealous husband's resentment still flagrant on her lovely face. Betty was not with her when I came in, but entered immediately after, and surprized her with these words—

Betty. Oh, Madam, I have the strangest thing to tell you!—Who does your ladyship think I have seen?

Cleora. Nay, I know not. Who, pray?

Betty. The very footman that brought your ladyship the letter yesterday, and put my master into such a rage. I was never so confounded in my whole life.

Cleora. Confounded, for what?—Where did you see him?

Betty. In the kitchen, Madam. When I went down, just now, to put on the tea-kettle for breakfast, who should I see there but him talking to Mrs. Clip! His master lodges here in the apartment above.

Cleora. Good Heaven! Was there ever so unfortunate an accident! To come to lodge in the same house with the man whom at present it most behoves me to avoid! Do you think he knows you?

Betty. O yes, Madam. Your ladyship may remember it was I that took the letter from him, and carried down your answer. I warrant he knows me again; but if he did not, I find Mrs. Clip has been babbling to him about your ladyship, for I heard her mention your name as I was upon the stairs.

Cleora. Sure I was infatuated not to forbid that woman telling any body I was here. But I must remove immediately: it would be my utter ruin if my husband, or any of his friends, should hear I had lain in this house but only one night.

Betty. Very true, indeed, Madam; and as soon as your ladyship has had your breakfast, I will go out and get another lodging.

Cleora. Don't talk of breakfasting. I will have you go this instant; I am distracted to think where I am.

Betty. Dear Madam, I beg you will not put yourself into such a hurry of spirits. It seems Leander is gone abroad; and these gay gentlemen, when once they go out, seldom return all day. I will engage your ladyship shall be removed before he knows any thing of your being here.

Cleora. You talk like a fool. As he went out so early, he is the more likely to come home to dress; therefore get away. I would not have him see me here for all the world.

Betty, finding her lady so resolute, made no farther delays, but went into the next room, and huddled on her capuchin and gloves; which done, she returned, and asked what part of the town would be most agreeable to her; to which Cleora replied, that all situations were alike to her, but should chuse some one or other of the streets that turned out of the Strand, as she must be private for a while, and had fewest acquaintance that way; and then bid her send Mrs. Clip to her. The maid went out, and Mrs. Clip entered the room presently after. Cleora told her the circumstances of her affairs laid her under a necessity of removing from her house, and intreated she would not make mention of her having been there to any one who might enquire for her. The other expressed a good deal of concern for losing so good a lodger, and assured her of observing secrecy in the point she desired.

While they were talking, a loud knocking at the door made Mrs. Clip run to the parlour window; and seeing who it was, cried out—'Bless me, 'tis Leander! His cloaths are all bloody, and his arm in a scarf! He has been fighting, that's certain! I thought there was some such thing in hand, by his going out so early this morning. I beg

I beg your ladyship's pardon; I must run and see if he wants any thing I can do for him.

Cleora was too much confounded at the name of Leander, and the condition she heard he was in, to offer to detain her; and, after she was gone, fell into a profound reverie, which held her for half an hour; and perhaps might have done so longer, if she had not been roused from it by a gentle knock at the parlour-door: but how greatly was she surprized when, on her calling to the person to come in, she saw Leander enter! she started, trembled, and, with a faltering voice, spoke thus to him—

Cleora. Oh, Sir, a visit from you is wholly improper at this time!

Leander. I hope not so, Madam; since I would not have so far intruded, but to acquaint you with something which it may be convenient for you to know. I have seen your husband this morning.

Cleora. Oh my foreboding heart! I dread to ask the consequence of such a meeting!

Leander. You need not, Madam. Aristus is unhurt, and I bear only one slight token of his intent to take my life.

Cleora. Then you have fought?

Leander. It was with the utmost regret I drew my sword against the husband of Cleora. But be pleased, Madam, to peruse this billet; and you will see the necessity that compelled me to it.

With these words he presented to her the challenge he had received the night before from Aristus; which, as soon as she had looked over, she returned to him again, saying—

Cleora. Unjust Aristus! But I thank Heaven nothing worse has ensued.

Leander. Heaven, Madam, has indeed alone the praise; since it was not to any superior skill of mine, or to any generosity in my antagonist, that I am indebted for my preservation; but to a kind of miracle.

Cleora. As how? Pray, Sir, inform me.

Leander. I know not, Madam, whether I can make you sensible how the thing happened, as your sex are ignorant of the terms made use of in the description of such rencounters; but I will do my best. When first we met, I would have endeavoured to reason him

out of a mistake so injurious to you and his own peace of mind, as well as to myself; but he refused to listen to any arguments I had prepared, and flew upon me with the rage of an incensed lion. By the manner of his fighting, I easily perceived he came with a resolution either to kill or be killed; so, as I was desirous of avoiding both the one and the other, I only stood upon my defence, and parried the pushes he made; though, in aiming at my breast, he several times exposed his own. The moderation I observed but enraging him the more, he attempted to close with me; and in that action I received a wound in my right-arm, a little above the bend, which hindered me from making any use of that wrist, I shifted my sword into the other hand; saying to him, at the same time—‘You see, Sir, I am disabled; we must leave the decision of this affair till some other time.’—‘No,’ cried he, ‘I am not so weak as to lose the advantage I have gained.’ On this I retreated some paces; and then redoubling his attacks, the awkward opposition I could now make would not have protected me one moment longer, if, in the very crisis of my fate, when the point of his weapon was just ready to transfix me to the earth, we had not fortunately been separated. Some people, whose windows had a prospect of the Artillery Ground, saw the first of our engagement; and making all the haste they could to prevent the threatened mischief, arrived in the instant I have mentioned, beat down the sword of Aristus, and placed themselves before me as a shield.

Cleora. Pray, Sir, what then did Aristus do?

Leander. Walked sullenly away, pursued by the reproaches of my deliverers till he was out of hearing; and it was with much ado that I prevailed with them to offer him no farther insults. But, Madam, while I am giving you the history of my ill-treatment, I fear it is in your power to present me with a more shocking detail of the cause that brought you hither.

Cleora. It is such a one, indeed, as, if the world be not as unjust as Aristus, will easily absolve me for the resolution I have taken of never living with him more. But it would happen very unlucky for my reputation, should it be known I have seen you even this once; I therefore

therefore intreat that, after I go hence, you will not think of making me any future visits.

Leander. Though it is hard to suffer for the faults of another, yet, Madam, be assured I shall never desire any thing that may give Aristus a pretence for his ill-treatment. I flatter myself, however, that the remembrance of our former tenderness is not so totally obliterated, but that friendship may subsist between us: you may, at least, permit me to write to you sometimes.

Cleora. I know not whether even that would not be too much.

Leander. Neither virtue, nor duty to the best of husbands, could set down as a fault the favour I request; and, to prevent all misinterpretations of our innocent correspondence, I shall take such precautions as will keep it a secret from all the world.

Cleora. Well, Sir, I cannot refuse this proof of your compassion for me, and think I ought not to deprive myself of any innocent consolation under my present affliction; you may therefore be assured, that I shall receive and answer your letters, with all the satisfaction a woman in my circumstances can or ought to feel.

He was going to make some reply, when Betty returned from her errand. She was a little surprized at seeing him there; and said nothing till her lady, impatient to know the success of what she had been about, spoke thus to her—

Cleora. Well, Betty, have you done the business I sent you on?

Betty. Yes, Madam. Please to step into the next room, and I will give you an account.

Cleora. No, you may tell me here. I dare trust this gentleman's discretion.

The maid then informed her that she had agreed for lodgings at the house of a great taylor, whom she named, in Norfolk Street. On this Cleora desired Leander to retire; saying she must get herself ready, for she was determined to depart immediately. He offered not to oppose her design; but though the love they took of each other now was accompanied with the greatest respect on his side, and reserve on her's, I could easily perceive that this interview had rekindled in both their hearts those flames of affection they before had felt.

After he had left the room, Cleora's things not having been unpacked, there needed little preparation for her going. She sent for Mrs. Clip, and made her a handsome present for the trouble she had given her house; but finding her a tattling woman, acquainted her not with that to which she was removing. I saw both the mistress and maid, with all their luggage, depart in the same manner they had come; but did not accompany them to their new habitation, as I could not promise myself with finding any thing there as yet worthy my enquiry. The discourse of the town afterwards informed me, that Cleora had employed a lawyer, and was soliciting either to have her whole fortune returned, or an annual allowance to the amount of the interest of it. Aristus was at first refractory to all proposals of this nature; but all his friends, and his mother in particular, joining their persuasions, he at last was prevailed on to sign articles of a final separation; by which it was agreed, that she should have a pension of three hundred pounds a year during his life; and, in case he died before her, her whole fortune restored.

I frequently called upon Cleora, and found that, during this negotiation with her husband, she kept her resolution of not seeing Leander; but that affair was no sooner over, than he visited her every day: the consequence of which may easily be guessed at, and was in a short time proved; for they went to Paris together, and still continue to reside there. This last action of Cleora's has doubtless given the world room to believe she had not been wronged by the suspicions of Aristus; but whoever is of this opinion does her a great deal of injustice. The Invisible Spy is a witness for her, that her inclinations were virtuous, her disposition grateful and sincere; and, had she been treated with that confidence a good wife ought to have been, no temptation would have had the power to have made her otherwise. Let all husbands, therefore, beware how they provoke, by ill-usage and distrust, the fate they would avoid; and observe this maxim of the poet's—

- ‘ He that would keep the fair-one true and
‘ kind,
‘ By love must clasp a padlock on her
‘ mind.’

CHAP. IV.

PRESENTS A FULL VIEW OF THE MUCH CELEBRATED SABINA, IN AN IMPARTIAL DESCRIPTION OF HER PERSON AND CHARACTER; WITH SOME PARTICULARS IN RELATION TO HER TWO AMOURS, AND THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH ATTENDED AN ASSIGNATION WITH HER FAVOURITE YOUNG-LY.

THAT children do not always behave in the same manner with their parents, is not so much owing to their being born with different propensities, as to their education, and the company they may happen to fall into, at an age when nature is most liable to be swayed by example. We often see the most virtuous couples unhappy in a degenerate offspring, but we rarely see good branches sprout from a vicious stock. An evil disposition may be corrected by advice, by persuasion, by example; and a good one perverted by the same means: but when a person is so unfortunate as to be descended from base and wicked parents, is brought up under them, is witness of all their actions, and has companions of the same cast, it is scarce possible that such a one can have a mind enriched with any noble or moral principles.

What other could the once-doating, deceived Germanicus, expect in his marriage with Sabina, than the vexations he has fatally experienced? Can all the beauties of her person now make atonement for the blemishes of her mind? No; he rather curses than admires those charms that drew him in, and wishes himself any thing, so he were not a husband. Yet ask him why he married, he will tell you he married a woman of fortune, quality, and an uncommon share of beauty. All this is true; but a man not blinded by passion, would have examined by what means the two former were obtained; and, above all, what sort of disposition was hid beneath the varnish of an outside loveliness. Was not her family amongst the lowest rank, till one of them raised himself to opulence by actions which ought to have brought him to a gibbet; and, instead of ennobling his

posterity, entailed on them perpetual infamy? Was she not trained up under a mother whose bad conduct has been equally notorious? Was she not, from her most early years, soothed in every vanity, pampered in every luxury, and taught to think that appetites and passions were never given but to be indulged?

Could Germanicus be ignorant of these glaring truths? If he were not, yet rashly ventured on so unpromising a union, who can pity the misfortunes, the disquiets, the disgrace, it has involved him in? The many proofs she gave of too warm an inclination before marriage, as also several of the many amours she had after she became a wife, I shall pass over: the first that made any great noise was that with Miramour, perhaps owing to the manner of its commencement; which he thinking himself under no obligation to conceal, has since made no secret of in all companies whenever her name comes upon the carpet.

This gentleman had a mistress, who, on account of a certain haughtiness in her temper and behaviour, he called Roxana. He supported her in so genteel a manner, that, had her reputation been equal to her appearance, she might have been entitled to the best company. Character, however, was the least thing considered by Sabina in the choice of her acquaintance. She accidentally met with this lady at a milliner's, fell into discourse with her, liked her, invited her to her house, and there soon grew a great intimacy between them. That Roxana was kept by Miramour was no secret to the town, nor did she attempt to make any of it to Sabina; on the contrary, she talked freely to her of their amorous correspondence. But how dangerous is it for one woman to boast too much of the perfections of her lover, to another no less sanguine in her constitution? Sabina, who had often seen Miramour without taking any notice of him, now became so fired with the rapturous description given of him by his mistress, that she instantly became her rival, and languished to experience in reality that happiness which the other had given her so high an idea of. As she never took any thing of this nature into her head without attempting to accomplish it, and had no regard to decorum in the manner

manner of her doing so, she sent a billet to him by a porter, containing these lines—

‘*STH,*
‘ If your attachment to the charms of your kept mistress makes you not look on the rest of womankind as insipid creatures, the invitation this brings you will not be unwelcome. A woman of quality, young, and in most men’s eyes handsome, has found something in you that excites in her the desire of a private interview, and to that end will call on you this evening about seven, at White’s; till when must remain, with a great deal of impatience,

‘ Your INCOGNITA.’

The messenger who carried this had strict orders not to tell from whom it came: curiosity, however—for it could be called no other passion as yet—made Miramour punctual to the time, nor was Sabina less so. He had not waited many minutes before she came. On his coming into the coach, he found her face entirely hid under her hood; which she told him, laughing, he must not expect to see, till they were in a place more proper for him to give her proof how agreeable it was to him. On this he ordered the coachman to drive to an adjacent tavern; where being shewn into a private room, the lady soon threw off her disguise. He had not enough depended on the character she had given of herself, not to be surprized and transported on finding Sabina in the person of his incognita; and expressed the sense he had of the honour she did, and the happiness he hoped their meeting would bestow on him, in terms so warm and so passionate, as infinitely charmed her. They passed some hours together to their mutual satisfaction; nor parted without an appointment to see each other the next day: but Sabina, not thinking it safe to come often to so publick a place as a tavern, undertook to provide a more proper scene for the continuance of their intrigue.

As indolent as this lady is in most other affairs, it must be confessed that no woman was ever more punctual, or more indefatigable, in every thing relating to love. On consulting with a female acquaintance, who had been often necessary on such occasions, she was

advised by her to hire a private lodging by the quarter, in some obscure nook of the town, to which she might retire whenever she had a mind, as it would be always ready, and neither herself nor the friends she should bring with her be taken any notice of. Sabina highly approving of what she said, the project was put in immediate execution. The woman took upon herself the accomplishment of what she had proposed, and easily found a place every way suitable for the business it was designed. The chamber was neat, spacious, and well furnished; there was a back-door to the house, through which any one might slip out in case of any danger of discovery; and the landlady knew perfectly well the decorum she ought to observe in regard to her guests. The heroine of this adventure was very well pleased with the accommodation procured for her; and having got this recess, which, according to the French, she used to call her *petit maison*, henceforward never met Miramour at any other place.

But there was one thing I forgot to mention in giving the character of this lady, which is the uncertainty of her temper. She is no less inconstant than she is amorous; and changes her lovers almost as often as she does her cloaths, and never keeps either till they are worn out: a new friend, like a new fashion, is always charming to her; but a very little time serves to make her equally grow weary of both. She loved Miramour till she saw Youngly; but there was something in the person and conversation of this last gentleman, that making reason coincide with passion, it is not to be wondered at that she gave him the preference; and a woman of a less mutable disposition might have been easily absolved for transferring her affections to an object so much more worthy than the late engrosser of her heart.

On her first acquaintance with him, she made advances to him; which he is too much a man of pleasure to resist from any fine woman: he returned those of Sabina in a manner which made her think him as much devoted to her as she could wish; and it was not long before she gave him an invitation to drink tea with her at her private apartment, where she told him they might laugh away an hour without interruption. He took the hint, and flew to the place of rendezvous; where it was not to be

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doubted but he found all the welcome he could wish or expect from the obliging fair. They had many interviews; but Youngly having by some accident heard of her intrigue with Miramour, he not only frequently reproached her with it, but also was far from feeling for her that affection in his heart, which otherwise her beauty might have inspired him with.

In the mean time Roxana, who from the commencement of Miramour's acquaintance with Sabina had seen him less often than she had been accustomed, and had also some other reasons to suspect a decrease of affection, began presently to imagine some new face had supplanted her. She complained to him of his unkindness, but he absolutely denied having given her any cause, and made a thousand excuses for his late behaviour: but this did not satisfy her, she was not to be deceived in matters of which she was so good a judge; and convinced that she had a rival, bent her whole thoughts on discovering the person. By an emissary whom she employed to watch Miramour wherever he went, she soon found out the place where he met the object of his new attachment; but as that lady was carried into the house in a chair, with the curtains close drawn, was still as far as ever from knowing the face that had undone her. Upon enquiry among the neighbours, she was informed that the house was noted for giving reception to people who liked each other more than they were willing the world should know; and this put a stratagem into her head, which was crowned with all the success she could wish or hope; not only for exploring what at present was a mystery to her, but also for being amply revenged on her fair rival.

The mistress of Miramour knew the town long before she knew him, and was not unacquainted with the customs of such houses. She went one morning to the governante of this; and, after saying she had been recommended by a person who knew her, told her she should be glad to have a chamber, to which she might sometimes come with a friend whom it was not convenient for her to see at home. The old gentlewoman replied, that her best room was rented by the quarter, by a lady who came often thither; and that the next, which was the only one she had to spare, she feared

would be too small. Roxana cried she did not regard how small it was, provided it was otherwise commodious. On this she was shewed up to it; and finding it was divided from the other only by a thin wainscot partition, presently agreed for it; giving the old woman so good a premium in hand, that she was highly satisfied with her new incumbent.

Having accomplished so far of her design as to get possession of the very next room to that where her lover and his new mistress met, she began to consider, that to go thither alone might raise some suspicions in the woman of the house; and was a little at a loss what man she should take with her, and make pass for a gallant; as, whoever went, he must be made the confidante of the whole affair. At last she pitched upon the fellow she had employed as a spy upon Miramour. His appearance, indeed, was very mean; but that she thought might not be regarded: accordingly she went the next day, accompanied by her pretended gallant. They were there some time before the hour in which he had told her he had seen Miramour go in, in order to prepare things for a more perfect discovery. This was done by the young fellow's boring holes through the wainscot, in so dexterous a manner, that they could see all over the room without being seen themselves, though they stood close to the orifice. No one, however, came that night; and the impatient Roxana was obliged to return home as dissatisfied as ever.

The next day she repaired thither again, attended as before, and met with the same disappointment; but on the third was more successful. She had not been many minutes in the chamber, when a rustling of silks upon the stairs made her know somebody was coming up; on which she ran hastily, without making any noise, to one of the peep-holes. But how great was her astonishment when she saw Sabina enter! Scarce could she refrain exclaiming aloud against the treachery of a woman who, after being made her confidante, had robbed her of the affections of her lover. But soon the current of her passion turned a different way; when, instead of Miramour, she saw Youngly push open the door, and throw himself into Sabina's arms; on which, withdrawing from her post—'You fool,'

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cried she to her emissary, 'to what a fruitless labour have you exposed me! It is not Miramour that I have all this while paid you for following. How could you be so mope-eyed as to mistake him!'—'Nay, Madam,' replied the fellow, 'I am sure I know Mr. Miramour, and I will swear that it was him I saw come into this house, and presently after a lady in a chair, as I then told you.' Roxana knew not what to think of this, and said no more; but listening attentively to the conversation within, was presently assured by it that her agent had neither deceived her, nor had been deceived himself, as will appear by the following dialogue—

Sabina. My dear, dear Youngly, I hope you will now believe that I love you above all the world.

Youngly. I know you love me enough to make me happy, and I ought to content myself with the share I have in your affections.

Sabina. Do not talk of a share: by Heaven, you engross me all! my soul and all it's faculties are devoted to you.

Youngly. And yet the letter Miramour accidentally dropped in the Park, and I took up, flattered him with the same assurances you now give me.

Sabina. As I unfortunately played the fool with him before I saw you, it was necessary I should break with him by degrees.

Youngly. You had once, however, a real passion for him.

Sabina. No, it was all in imagination; I only fancied I loved him. You must know, that silly, vain creature, his kept mistress, was always filling my ears with stories of the violence of his affection for her; and it was more to shew him the difference between such a wretch and a woman of quality, than any extraordinary liking I had to his person, that induced me to grant him the favours I did.

This was enough to let the listening Roxana into the whole affair. It was with much ado she restrained herself from flying into the next room, and returning the contempt thrown upon her by the last words of Sabina; but just as she was at the door, and ready to burst in on the unsuspecting pair, a sudden thought made her turn back. 'All I

can say to this perfidious woman,' cried she to herself, 'will avail me nothing; the wrongs I have received demand a vengeance more complete.' She then sat down again; and, calmly meditating on what she had to do, the fertility of her invention soon supplied her with the means of repaying, with interest, the double affront Sabina had given both to herself and Miramour, whom it is certain she loved with more sincerity than is commonly found among women of her profession. She staid till the lovers took their leaves of each other, and heard an appointment made between them to meet again on the ensuing Thursday.

Having fully perfected in her mind the design she soon after put in execution, she called for the woman of the house, and said to her—'Madam, I know not but some gentlemen may pass an hour or two with me here next Thursday. They may possibly come before me; but I desire you will give them admittance; and, to prevent mistakes, as the furniture of the room is yellow, they shall ask for the key of the yellow chamber.' The other replied, that she might depend on her punctuality in observing her commands. After which Roxana went away; but what she meant by the orders she had given must be left to the next chapter to explain.

CHAP. V.

CONTAINS THE CATASTROPHE OF AN ADVENTURE, WHICH THE AUTHOR THINKS FIT TO DECLARE IS INSERTED IN THESE LUCUBRATIONS LESS TO AMUSE HIS READER, THAN FOR THE SAKE OF SETTING IN A TRUE LIGHT THOSE FACTS WHICH SOME PEOPLE HAVE ARTFULLY ENDEAVOURED TO MISREPRESENT TO THE PUBLICK.

ROXANA being now fully furnished with materials for her revenge on Sabina, without exposing her beloved Miramour to the resentment of an injured husband, wrote to the latter, the next morning, in words to this effect—

TO GERMANICUS.

SIR,
THIS brings you a very ungrateful piece of intelligence: but, in my opinion, whoever sees a person wronged, and conceals it, takes part in the offence; and, though innocent of the commencement of the crime, is accessory to the continuance of it. It would certainly be the utmost injustice, that you should be the last person to know what concerns yourself alone; and I therefore think it my duty to inform you of what chance has discovered to me. Your wife, Sir, is false to your bed, and lavishes on Mr. Youngly all those favours which you have a right to engross. The guilty pair meet twice or thrice every week, at a lodging she rents by the quarter for that purpose. But to say your wife is guilty of so foul a crime, is doing nothing, without putting it in your power to prove her so: the thing, Sir, is easy, if you will follow my directions. The lovers have appointed to meet to-morrow, about seven, at their usual rendezvous; if you go at that time, or rather before it, to the third house on the left-hand in **** Lane, on your asking for Mrs. ****, who is the keeper of this private brothel, and telling her you want the key of the yellow chamber, she will presently conduct you to a room adjoining to that which is the scene of your wife's loose pleasures. There are holes already bored through the wainscot, through which you may plainly discern all that passes. It is at your own option whether you will have any other witnesses of your wife's transgression than your own eyes, and also how to behave towards her after detection. I have discharged the dictates of my conscience in giving you this information; and am, Sir,

Your unknown Friend.

P. S. Be careful to drop no words that may give the woman of the house the least cause to suspect either who you are, or the motive of your coming.

It is convenient I shou'd now acquaint my reader, that all I have hitherto related of this story has come to my knowledge entirely by the report of the persons

chiefly concerned in it, and without the least assistance from my Belt of Invisibility. What yet remains to be told, I have the testimony of my own eyes and ears to avouch. The many odd accounts I have heard, from time to time, in relation to Sabina's conduct, made me resolve to go one day to the house of Germanicus, in order to satisfy my curiosity with seeing in what fashion this couple behaved to each other.

The lady was abroad when I came, and I found him up in his dining-room, diverting himself with playing on the flute; but soon after roused from that amusement by the above letter being delivered to him by his man, saying it was brought by a fellow who the moment he had put it into his hands vanished like lightning from the door. The emotions with which he read it were very great, yet much less than might have been expected on such an occasion. He paused, then read again, examined every line with heedful eyes, and seemed extremely divided in his thoughts what credit he should give to the information: at last, said he to himself—'If any one had formed this contrivance, through a malicious design of ruining her reputation, or my peace of mind, they would certainly have taken other methods, and not, by pointing out the place, the hour, put it in my power to prove at once the falseness of the accusation.'

After this, he threw himself into an easy chair, leaned his head upon his hand, and in that posture continued musing for a considerable time; then seeming more resolved, started up and cried—'It is easy for me to make enquiry if there be such a house, if kept by a woman of the name mentioned in the letter, and what character it bears. Yet, why should I do this?—No, it is better to follow the instructions given me, and be at once assured. It shall be so. As Shakespeare makes Othello say—

'I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove:

'And on the proof there is no more but this—

'Away at once with love or jealousy.'

He had scarce done repeating these lines, when Sabina came in, singing an Italian air. Germanicus endeavoured to

to recompose his countenance, but could not do it so well as not to make her take notice of the change, and ask if he were out of humour; to which he replied—

Germanicus. Out of humour, Madam? No, I have no cause; none in the world.

Sabina. I think not, indeed; but men will be peevish sometimes, cause or not cause.

Germanicus. I reserve all my gaiety for to-morrow, and would have you do so too. A kinsman of mine makes an entertainment, and has sent an invitation for us to be partakers of it.

Sabina. What, to-morrow?

Germanicus. Yes, my dear, to-morrow evening: so I desire you will not engage yourself elsewhere.

Sabina. Indeed I have engaged myself already to Lady Gape's assembly.

Germanicus. You have time enough, then, to send to excuse yourself from going.

Sabina. Indeed I shall not. I would not disappoint my dear Lady Gape for all the kinsmen in the world. But I would have you go: you may say I am not well, and then my absence cannot be taken amiss.

It was very plain to me, that Germanicus made this pretended invitation only as a trap to discover whether she had really any engagement on her hands that she would not be willing to break; and it is also as little to be doubted, but that her answers very much corroborated the contents of the epistle he had just received. He forced himself, however, to tell her, with a smile, that every thing should be as she would have it, and that he would no farther press her. Some company presently after coming in, I found there was nothing more to be learned at that time, so took the first opportunity of quitting the house; and went again, the next afternoon, in hopes of discovering something more.

On my arrival, the husband and wife were sitting together in the most seeming amicable manner. After some little time Germanicus rose up, and put on his hat and sword, in order, as he said, to go to his kinsman; on which Sabina, with a great deal of complaisance, said to him—

Sabina. You will not walk, sure, my dear! Have you ordered the horses to be put to?

Germanicus. No, my dear; I leave the coach for you.

Sabina. There is no occasion. I always chuse to go to these places in a chair.

Germanicus. That is as you please; but I shall walk, as I have three or four places to call at in my way to my cousin's; so farewell, my dear. I hope you will be as merry at the assembly, as I hope to be at the entertainment.

As I imagined Germanicus had something in his head more than I knew of, by his being so hasty to be gone; I followed him close at his heels, and found I had not been mistaken in my supposition. He went into a tavern, where two gentlemen, whom he had desired to meet him there, waited for him. The business he had with them, was to communicate the letter he had received from the unknown friend; and, after having considered a little on the matter, they agreed that they should all three go together; not only to prevent any indiscreet effects of his rage on the persons who wronged him, in case the affair should prove as the letter had represented, but also to be his witnesses, if he thought proper to bring it before a court of judicature. They staid till a little before seven; then went, according to the directions given by Roxana, and found every thing answered the description. They were shewn up into the yellow chamber: I still accompanied them; and made a fourth person, unseen, as well as unseen, by any of them.

They had not been there above half an hour, before Sabina came into the next room; Youngly soon after joined her; and the much-injured husband, and his two friends, saw enough, from the peep-holes in the partition, to convince them of the truth of that information which had brought them thither. Difficult was it for Germanicus to restrain his fury on so shocking a spectacle; but his two friends reminding him that there was a much better way for him to shew his resentment, he was at length prevailed on to retire. They both went home with him, as did myself; resolving to see what farther events this night would produce. Sabina came not home till near two hours past midnight: but Germanicus had ordered that the door should not be opened; and, after her chairmen had knocked two or three times, he went himself to the parlour-window, and spoke to her in these terms—

Germanicus.

Germanicus. Please, Madam, to return from whence you came, or wherever else you shall think proper. My house shall no longer be the shelter of a prostitute.

Sabina. What, is the man mad! Sure you have been drinking bad wine to-night!

Germanicus. No, Madam, the best I ever drank in my life; it has opened my eyes, and shewn me the viper I have so long cherished in my bosom, and now throw off for ever. But I would not wish you to stay longer in the cold; you can have no entrance here; Mr. Youngly will doubtless afford you a part of his bed.

With these words he shut the window; and Sabina, finding herself detected, and that her husband was resolute, ordered her chair from the door; and after some little consideration how to dispose of herself, thought it best to take her husband's advice, and return to the place from whence she came, as it was

the only asylum to which she could have recourse at so unseasonable an hour.

In the several visits I afterwards made to Germanicus, I perceived he behaved with much more moderation than some husbands would have done. Philosophy had taught him to support with patience a misfortune which was irremediable; he contented himself with taking such revenge as the laws of England have provided in these cases. Youngly was summoned before a court of judicature, and a penalty inflicted on him for his offence; but it would have been larger, had it not been proved, by incontestible evidences, that he had not been the first who had seduced Sabina from her marriage-vows. As for the lady, she is now abandoned and despised by both her lovers; and if there be a possibility that any thing can bring her to a just sense of the faults she has been guilty of, it must be the contempt she is treated with by all degrees of people.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.



THE
INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK IV.

CHAP. I.

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR CONFESSES
HAVING BEEN GUILTY OF PETTY
LARCENY; BUT HOPES THAT
IT MERITS FORGIVENESS FROM
THOSE INTO WHOSE HANDS THIS
WORK MAY FALL, AS THE CHIEF
MOTIVE FOR COMMITTING IT
WAS TO OBLIGE THE PUBLICK.



I Have been intimately acquainted with Belinda for a considerable time in my visible capacity, yet never once took it into my head to make her a visit under the cover of my Belt, till her return from Bath this last season; nor perhaps had done it then, if I had not been told that she suffered herself to be conducted to that place by a certain gentleman whom I thought it highly improper for her to continue any conversation with, as he was a married man, and the same Philander hereafter mentioned in some of Selima's letters. On my entering her apartment, I found her busy with her waiting-maid in unpacking her baggage; which coming by the waggon, it seems had arrived in town but the night

before. As I could promise myself but little entertainment from the assortment of ribbands, jewels, &c. I was thinking to quit the place, and return at a more fit season; when the maid, pulling out a satten bag full of papers, asked her where she would have those writings laid; on which Belinda turned her head that way, and replied—' They are a heap of letters I received at Bath, of no manner of consequence. I have no room for such rubbish; take and throw them all into the fire.'

The maid was just going to do as she was bid, but was stopped by Belinda, who suddenly screamed out—' Hold! hold! I had forgot, that one day, in a hurry, I stuffed two or three letters and poems of Philander's among them; and I would not have one line of that dear witty creature's destroyed for all the world. Pour them all out of the bag, and look on the names subscribed, that I may direct you how to separate the wheat from the chaff.' The maid then threw them all down upon the carpet, and opened them one by one; which done, Belinda added—' You need search no farther; I have found all Philander's letters and poems in this drawer; so cram together all you have there, and thrust them into

'into the fire.' This sentence was punctually executed, according to the best of the maid's belief; but the poor girl knew not there was an Invisible Thief, who stood close at her elbow, and while she turned her head another way, had the dexterity to preserve some part of the condemned cargo, and slip it into his pocket.

Selima at that time engrossed great part of the conversation in town. She was a young woman of no fortune, and few other endowments besides her beauty, of which, in the opinion of most people, she has an uncommon share; though to me there is a certain fierceness in her eyes, and a boldness diffused through all her features, which rob them of that loveliness which they would otherwise have. Such as she is, however, she captivated the hearts of two persons who might have carried their addresses much higher without danger of a refusal: the one is born to a title, and the other possessed of wealth which, whenever he pleases, may procure him one; and neither of them can be thought deficient in any of those qualifications which constitute the fine gentleman. Yet Selima was still unmarried; both her lovers were equally in suspense, and nobody could tell which, or whether either of them, would be the happy man. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that a person of my humour should be extremely desirous of being let into a secret which seemed so impenetrable, even to those who pretended to be most knowing in other things; nor that I gladly embraced an opportunity which bid so fair for the satisfaction of my curiosity, as the getting her letters into my possession, Belinda having said they contained the whole history of this affair.

Behold now my theft! Belinda's maid had no sooner laid down the packet, by her lady's orders, than I kept my eye constantly fixed upon it, till a convenient moment offered for conveying it from among the others, which I did with great adroitness. After this I staid no longer with Belinda, not doubting but I had now about me better materials for my entertainment, than any I could expect to be furnished with in her apartment, at least for the present.

The distance between Belinda's lodgings and my own seemed now to be twice as long as usual, though I believe I measured much fewer paces than ever

I had done before, so great was my impatience to be at home, and examine the treasure I brought with me. To avoid confusion, I examined the dates of every letter, and shall present them to my readers in the order they were sent to her while at Bath.

LETTER I.

'DEAR BELINDA,

'I Received the favour of yours with a double satisfaction; first, as it brought me news of your safe arrival at that agreeable place, and that every thing in it answered your wishes and expectations; and secondly, as it assures me of your friendship, by the kind concern you are pleased to express for my welfare. As to my health, I have quite lost that ugly cough which so much persecuted me when you left London; but as to my affairs, they are still in the same fluctuating and unsettled condition as ever. Dorantes still continues his addresses, Vanucius does the same. How happy might I be if I was loved but by one of them! but both equally pursuing me, impedes all the good fortune I might enjoy with either.

'You may remember how much my mamma was transported when Dorantes first declared himself my lover. Vanucius, though not quite dropped, was then little regarded either by myself or her: but now the case is altered; she charges me to treat both with an equal freedom; and, indeed, I think it would be highly impolitic to do otherwise. The truth is, Dorantes does not come so directly to the point as could be wished: his courtship is passionate, tender, and full of fire; he swears I am the idol of his soul, that he could not live without me, and that all his hopes are centered in being one day happy in possessing me; yet, among all these fine speeches, he seldom mentions marriage; and when he does, it is in so slight and evasive a manner, as to give me sometimes cause to fear his designs are rather on my heart than hand. If this should be his intention, and I were weak enough to have fixed my affection on him, how miserable should I be! But, thank Heaven, I have none of that soft folly in my composition by which

'I have

‘ I have seen so many of our sex misled; my ruling passions are interest and ambition; and I would not hesitate one moment to give myself to Vanucius, if the rank and title of Dorantes did not tempt me to wait awhile the result of his pretensions.

‘ I was yesterday morning in the Mall with Vanucius: Dorantes was walking there with some company; he changed colour, and seemed in some agitation on meeting us together. This I looked upon as a good sign; but in the afternoon, when he came to visit me, and I expected he would either have complained of my indifference to him, or reproached me for the publick encouragement I had given his rival; he did neither, but behaved the whole time with all the calmness and insensibility of a Stoick. I must confess, I was never more disappointed in all my life, as I had frequently seen him kindle into jealousy on a less occasion; and could not help thinking that the violence of his passion was in a great measure abated, according to this maxim of Mr. Dryden—

“ Distrust in lovers is too warm a sun;
“ But yet ’tis night in love when that is
“ gone.”

‘ On consulting with my mamma, I found she was of the same way of thinking; and it was agreed upon between us, not to suffer ourselves to be trifled with any longer, but that the next time Vanucius made an offer of his hand, I should accept it. But, my dear Belinda, this morning has put a stop to the resolution of last night. I was scarce out of bed, when I received from Dorantes the most passionate billet that ever was dictated by the heart of man; occasioned, as he says, by dreaming he had me in his arms. If his love be half so impatient to have me there as he pretends it is, he will certainly be now more pressing to make me his own than hitherto he has been.

‘ My next, perhaps, may bring you the decision of my fate: mean time, I should be glad to hear what is doing at Bath, and what new conquests you have made there; for how much sooner you may be envied by some of your acquaintance, be assured that every thing that contributes to your

satisfaction, will always afford a secret pleasure to her who is, with the most perfect amity, &c.

‘ SELIMA.’

LETTER II.

‘ DEAR BELINDA,

‘ I Am sorry to tell you, that the perplexity of my own affairs has hindered me from being inquisitive enough into those of other people, for me to be able to send you the intelligence you request; but as I flatter myself, that what regards myself will be always most interesting to you, I shall give you a brief detail of what has happened to me in relation to Dorantes, since his last kind letter mentioned in my former.

‘ He came the same evening. The discourse he entertained me with was of a piece with his epistle, all love and transport. He begged I would favour him with my company to the theatre in Drury Lane, where he had already sent a servant to keep places in the box; I consented, and went with him in his chariot. The play was Romeo and Juliet: he applied all the tender things spoke by the former of these lovers to his own passion, and pressed my hand with a vehemence of fondness, whenever he had an opportunity of doing so unperceived by the audience.

‘ I saw him again next day. We were alone together in the dining-room; and my gown being a little more off my shoulder than ordinary, he laid his face upon my bare neck, crying—“ Oh, I could dwell for ever here!” On this I took courage to say to him—“ Yet, Dorantes, when once I become your wife, these ardours will perhaps sink into a cold indifference.”—“ No, my angel!” returned he, “ desire will rather increase by enjoyment of your person; the sweets contained in this dear frame are of too divine a nature ever to satiate.” In speaking these words, he caught me suddenly in his arms, held me to his bosom, and joined his lips to mine with so newhat, I thought, of an unbecoming warmth. I struggled to get loose; and when I had done so, retired some paces from him, and said, with all the haughtiness I
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‘ could assume—“ Forbear these liberties, Sir, till authorized by law to take them.” He asked my pardon, apologized for what he had done by the violence of his passion, and then sat down; but appeared more than ordinarily penfive afterwards, spoke little, and made his visit much shorter than usual.

‘ On my acquainting my mamma with what had passed between us, she did not at all like it, and went directly to her old friend, you know who I mean, to be advised by him how to proceed in a circumstance at once so intricate and critical. He told her, that my father ought to appear in this business; that it was his place, and his alone, to demand of Dorantes an explanation of his designs in regard to the courtship he so long had made to his daughter. My mamma had always been of his opinion; but knowing the indolence of my father’s temper, had forbore mentioning it to him: however, she urged it to him, but all she could say or offer has been ineffectual; his answer was, that he did not know how to speak to a person of Dorantes’s quality on any such matter; that he would not interfere in it, and we might act as we thought proper ourselves.

‘ This, you will own, is very vexatious; but there is no turning him out of his own way. Mamma is now resolved, since there is no other remedy, to take the task upon herself, as soon as Dorantes comes to town: he is at present gone on a hunting match with some gentlemen, but is expected to return in two days at farthest, and we shall then see the event. For my part, my spirits are so much fatigued and harassed with this suspense, that there is but one thing hinders me from putting an immediate end to it by marrying with Vanucius. The persons of the men are equal to me; but, O Belinda! I am passionately in love with the title of Dorantes! Would he were half as much so with my person, he would not then delay one moment giving me the one in exchange for the other.

‘ The faithful Vanucius, whom I have flattered with the belief of not being indifferent to me, is every day soliciting me to fix a time to make him

‘ happy, while Dorantes seems to dally with my expectations; yet can I not resolve to reward the constant services of the one, nor to renounce for ever the charming hope of rank, precedence, the thousand dear appendages of a woman of quality, which the other has it in his power to bestow on me. But I will trouble you no farther, than to assure you, that in whatever station my fate shall place me, I shall be ever, with the best wishes for your happiness, &c.

‘ SELIMA.

‘ P. S. I am obliged to Philander for the part you tell me he takes in my concerns. Pray be so good as to make my grateful acknowledgments acceptable to him.’

LETTER III.

‘ DEAR BELINDA,

‘ I Would not let this post escape without writing. What I have now to say to you, though greatly to the purpose, must be comprized in a few words. I am engaged to go this evening with Dorantes, and some other company, on a party of pleasure, and am every moment expecting his landau at the door, so can but just snatch time to inform you, that my mamma has talked to him on the affair in question, and that his answers have been conformable to our utmost wishes. Yes, I am now convinced that all my apprehensions were groundless, that he never meant to act otherwise than honourably with me: he has assured both her and myself, that every thing shall soon be settled for my future happiness. Rejoice with me, my dear creature! I have now a heart and head perfectly at ease; and nothing to employ my thoughts, but how to behave becoming of the dignity to which, I flatter myself, a few days will raise me. Farewel. The author of my joys is already come; they call me to receive him; and I can add no more, than that I am, as ever, with unfeigned regard, &c.

‘ SELIMA.’

LETTER

LETTER IV.

DEAR BELINDA,

LITTLE did I expect, and little is it in your power to imagine, what I have now to acquaint you with. So strange a reverse, so sudden, so shocking a revolution, sure never any woman but myself experienced! But I will keep you no longer in suspense: I have lost Dorantes, irrecoverably lost him! not through any mismanagement of my own, nor any want of affection in him, but through a previous, much worse, and more irreparable accident. This is the sum of my misfortunes; I will now relate to you the particulars.

He came to me the other day; and though the salutations he approached me with had their accustomed tenderness, yet I thought there was somewhat in his countenance, and the whole air of his deportment, very different from any thing I had ever seen in him before. He had not been in the room many minutes, before he told me that he had something of consequence to impart to me, and desired I would order myself to be denied to whoever should happen to come. I readily did as he desired; after which, he drew his chair close to mine, sighed, and, looking me full in the face, surprised me with these words—"My dear Selima," said he, "I have deceived you; have you love enough for me to forgive it?"—"First let me know the nature of your offence," returned I. "'Tis death to me to declare it," answered he; "yet can it be no longer hid. I have imposed upon you by a false pretence, promised what is not in my power to perform—I cannot marry you!"

Judge, Belinda, of my confusion. But it is as impossible for you to conceive, as it is for me to describe, what I felt in that dreadful moment. Scarce could a thunderbolt have transfixed me more: I had no breath, no voice, but to echo part of his last words—"Cannot marry! cannot marry!" cried I; and this I repeated several times over.

He seemed all this time in very great agitations; and, after taking one of my hands, and tenderly pressing it to his lips—"Heaven knows," said he,

"how earnestly I desired the union I proposed! Gladly would I resign the one half of those years fate has allotted for my life, to have the other blessed with the possession of my Selima in the way she expects from me; but, alas! that hope is vain. The fatal secret is this: I am already married; my heedless and unwary youth was ensnared to give my hand to a creature who, though I never did, nor never will, live with as a wife, will not, on any consideration, be prevailed upon to resign the cursed claim she has to me as a husband."

Overwhelmed as I was with various passions, I at last assumed resolution enough to tell him that he had acted a most ungenerous and dishonourable part in making his addresses to me, knowing himself under so indissoluble an engagement to another. To which he replied, that at first he hoped to have got quit of his unfortunate tie; and that after he found all the offers he had made to that end were fruitless, the passion he had for me would not suffer him to restrain himself from seeing me, conversing with me, and telling me how much he adored me. He then made a long harangue on the resistless power of my charms, and the violence of that flame they had inspired him with; swore a thousand oaths, that the world had nothing in it but myself worth living for; and concluded with a proposal, that since he could not make me his wife, he would settle a thousand pounds a year upon me to be his mistress; and that it should be at my option either to live publicly with him as such, or to continue with my mamma, and receive his visits in a private manner.

This offer I rejected with more disdain than I had shewn to any of the like nature which had ever been made to me since my first being in the way of temptation; nor will you wonder that I did so. To be courted for a mistress by the very man who had so lately flattered me with the hopes of marriage, made me now look upon that as an affront, which, before my expectations had been raised to the height they had been, I might perhaps have taken as a proof of his affection. I ranted, stormed, concealed no part of the spite I was possessed of: but all I said seemed to make no great im-

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‘preffion on him; he bore it with a temper which I thought not at all consistent with the violence of the passion he had pretended; and, on his going away, calmly told me, that he would make the same proposal he had done to me to no other woman in the world; that it was no inconsiderable one; and that, as he could do no more, he hoped my cooler moments would represent it as a thing worthy my attention.

‘Indeed, my dear Belinda, I was half mad; and believe I gave myself some airs not any way becoming in me to a man of his quality. I met him in the Park this morning; but though he was alone, and I had only Flavia with me, he never offered to join us, but passed by with a slight bow. I suppose he resents my behaviour; but it is no matter, since he is married. Vanucius is now my last resource. If I could persuade the man to purchase a title, he would be full as agreeable to me as Dorantes; but he is an unambitious creature, and I almost despair of it: I shall try, at least, how far the love he has for me will prevail. My next will bring you news of what success my endeavours will meet; till when I am, even in the midst of my perplexity, &c.

‘SELIMA.’

LETTER V.

‘DEAR BELINDA,

‘IT is almost a sin to disturb the felicity you enjoy with any melancholy accounts: but fresh calamities will always occasion fresh complaints; and while I am giving you a detail of my misfortunes, methinks I am eased of some part of the weight of them. You may say, indeed, that this is a selfish consideration, and I cannot deny the accusation; but have this to answer in my defence—“However disagreeable the purport of my letters are, they shew, at least, the perfect confidence I have in your friendship and good nature.”

‘I am apt to think that, before I tell you, you will suspect I am also deserted by Vanucius; and though I cannot be positive that such a conjecture would be entirely groundless, yet

‘I have little reason to flatter myself with the contrary. I have neither seen nor heard from him for five whole days; and this morning he set out for Tunbridge, without taking any other leave of me, than sending a slight excuse for not waiting on me before he went. But this is not all: a relation of his, who I know has always looked upon his courtship to me with an evil eye, and had, not long ago, so great a quarrel with him on the occasion, that he was forbid his house, is now so far reinstated in his good graces, as to be gone with him into the country; and I do not doubt but will take this opportunity of filling his ears with a thousand stories to my disadvantage, as he has ever done since my first acquaintance with him.

‘Thus, my dear Belinda, from having, as I thought, my choice of two of the best matches in town, I am likely to lose all hopes of both, and also to fall into the contempt and ridicule of those flirts who so lately envied my good fortune. This last circumstance is above all so truly mortifying, that after it I know not whether I shall ever be able to shew my face in any publick assembly, but rather take the same pains to conceal myself, as I once did to be conspicuous. But farewell. The more I reflect on these accidents, the less I am capable of restraining my passion enough to assure you, with how much sincerity, &c.

‘SELIMA.’

LETTER VI.

‘DEAR BELINDA,

‘I Expected no less, from your known goodness, than the consolatory ideas you endeavour to inspire me with. You would fain persuade me that I have no reason for despair; and that the same beauty which attracted the hearts of Dorantes and Vanucius, will also gain others of equal estimation; but, alas! I have too much experience of myself, and of what the world thinks of me, to entertain so flattering a hope. You know very well, my dear, that on my first setting up for conquest, I shewed myself in all publick places, and exposed to the view of all who saw me, almost every
‘charm

charm nature has bestowed upon me; yet never was addressed, on the score of marriage, by any but those two whom I have now lost. Besides, I am now what they call blown upon: that admiration which my first appearance excited, wears off by my being so often seen; and I begin to be convinced, that it was more owing to the peculiarity of my dress, and manner of behaviour, than to any real perfections of my person, that I was so much followed by a gaping multitude.

You see how I am humbled; and, by what I have said, may perhaps imagine that I have so far done with the pride and vanities of the world, as to take up with a little mercer or wool-len-draper, if such a one should offer. But do not harbour so despicable an opinion of your friend: no, I will never sit behind a compter, or be the wife of one that does. But I need not make this declaration; as matters stand, I am not likely to be the wife of any body: but still, with an inviolable respect, &c.

‘SELIMA.’

LETTER VII.

‘DEAREST BELINDA,

NOW may all the gods of love and wit inspire my pen, to describe to you, as it deserves, the blessed reverse in my condition since the last melancholy epistle you received from me. I was then plunged in the lowest pit of despair, and am now raised to the highest summit of human felicity. In a word, I am the contracted spouse of Dorantes; and, as soon as the preparations for our wedding can be got ready, I shall be the declared ***** of *****. Methinks I see the surprize I put you in. You will doubtless cry out—“How can this be, when Dorantes has already confessed himself the husband of another?” It seems, indeed, a paradox; yet stands in no need of school-learning to be explained, as you will presently discover.

After the loss of both my lovers, as I then imagined, I scarce did any thing but lie up on the bed and weep for two whole days together. My father, instead of saying any thing to

console my afflictions, added to them by his reproaches. He told me that he knew what it would come to; that dressing myself up like a Bartholomew baby would never get me a husband; and such like stuff, as you know his low way of expressing himself: but, thank Heaven! the tables are now turned upon him; and if respect for my mamma did not restrain me, I should return his flouts with interest.

One afternoon, as I was sitting at the window, with the sash up, musing on my unhappy fate, I saw Dorantes's chariot at the door. While his footman knocked, he looked out, and made me a very respectful bow. I was amazed; but thought it would be too gross an affront to a man of his quality to be denied to him, as he saw I was at home; nor had I time for such a thing, if I would have done it; for the maid, who opened the door, shewed him directly up stairs. On his entrance, I assumed one of those haughty airs, which vulgar, low-bred people, are apt to call impudent and saucy; and, with my head half-turned another way, said to him—“I am surprized to see you here, Dorantes, after the conversation you entertained me with at your last visit.”

“Oh, Selima,” replied he, “I came not now to repeat the audacity I was then guilty of, nor to offend your ears with any future discourses of the like nature, but to beg pardon for the past; and hope that what I have to offer will make some atonement.”—“I do not comprehend your meaning,” returned I; “but, whatever it may be, cannot think it becomes me to continue any correspondence with a married man, who has pretended to make his addresses to me.”—“I am not married,” rejoined he eagerly; “and the trial I made of your virtue, adds a double lustre to the beauty that first inflamed me, and I am now much more your slave than ever.”—“Not married!” cried I; “why then did you tell me so?”—“Pardon the innocent imposition I practised on you,” said he, kissing my hand: “I was willing to see in what manner you would resent it; your behaviour has answered to my wish, and I now offer you a hand which

" which I never had one thought or wish to dispose of to any other woman."

" Oh, Belinda, how did my heart flutter at these words! As Semandra says in the play—

" I took them all, and died upon the sound:
" To the driv'n air my flying soul was fasten'd.

" Each charming syllable he spoke was mine."

" The many passionate and endearing things he said to me would not come within the compass of twenty letters; you must therefore, till I have a better opportunity of relating the particulars, content yourself with a brief summary of the whole, which is this; that he is entirely at liberty to marry me, and he is resolved to do so; that an agreement the same night was made between us for that purpose; and that mamma and her good friend, who luckily happened to be with her, were called in to be witnesses of it.

" Since every thing has been settled thus happily for me, some people have been impertinent enough to assure me, that to their own knowledge Dorantes was married several years ago, and that his wife is still alive; but this gives me no manner of concern. If there be any woman who has a claim of this nature on him, he has doubtless found means to prevail on her to relinquish it; so I look upon it as none of my affair. He marries me in the face of the world; has promised to present me at court; and while I enjoy the title of ***** of ***** and the grandeur annexed to it, shall not trouble myself with any whispers that may go about the town in relation to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of my marriage.

" It is no inconsiderable addition to my contentment, to hear that you design to return to town in a short time. I long to see you, and to give you an airing in my own coach and six, with three flaunting footmen on the back of it: we shall cut a better figure, Belinda, than when we made our little excursions together in a mean, dirty hack. O, Fortune! Fortune! dear, propitious Fortune, how am I bound to praise thee! But no more at present,

than that I am, with the greatest good wishes, &c.

" SELIMA.

" P. S. I need not desire you to tell Philander what has happened; I know you will, and also that his regard for you will make him participate in the happiness of your friend. Once more, adieu."

Here end the letters of this celebrated lady, who in a very little time after married Dorantes.

CHAP. VI.

CONSISTS CHIEFLY OF SOME REFLECTIONS OF THE AUTHOR'S OWN ON FALSE TASTE, THE MISTAKEN ROAD IN THE PURSUIT OF FAME, AND THE FOLLY OF AN ILL-DIRECTED EMULATION. TO WHICH ARE ADDED, A FEW FAINT SKETCHES TAKEN FROM THE MOST AMIABLE ORIGINALS IN MODERN LIFE.

THE celebrated Dr. Buffy tells us, than when we say a man has a fine or true taste, no more is meant by those words, than that he has a sound judgment, a clear head, and a nicely distinguishing capacity in judging of what is really worthy and becoming, and what is not so; whether it be in the choice of his amusements, his equipage, his apparel, the furniture of his house, the covering of his table, or whatever else depends on the direction of the will and fancy. Now, as every thing is best shewn by it's opposite, if the definition given us by the French author of the true taste be just, as I believe most people will allow it is, to think and act contrary to what he describes, is what we call false taste: but, in my opinion, to think and do always what is wrong, and at the same time imagine that all we think and do is right, is not of itself sufficient to take in the meaning of the phrase in it's full extent; there must always be added an affectation of being singular, over curious, over delicate, over elegant, somewhat above the common level of mankind; in fine, the man of a false taste must not be a fool of Heaven's making,

making, but his own. The late witty Earl of Rochester has presented us with a very picturesque character of the man of false taste, in the following lines—

- ‘ He was a fool through choice, not want
‘ of wit;
- ‘ His foppery, without the help of sense,
- ‘ Could ne’er have risen to such an excel-
‘ lence.
- ‘ Nature’s as lame in making a true sop
- ‘ As a philosopher: the very top
- ‘ And dignity of folly, we attain
- ‘ By studious search, and labour of the
‘ brain;
- ‘ By observation, counsel, and deep thought.
- ‘ God never made a coxcomb worth a groat:
- ‘ We owe that name to industry and arts;
- ‘ An eminent fool must be a man of parts.’

A person may be endowed with great talents, yet, through a false taste in the manner of displaying them, be rendered ridiculous instead of respectable; and, while he aims at attracting universal admiration, become the object of universal contempt. Hippias is profoundly learned, is well skilled in the most useful sciences, and endowed, both by nature and education, with every requisite to render him a worthy member of society; yet, by some unaccountable oddities of manners and behaviour, he makes himself hated where he might be loved, despised where he might be respected, and a mere cypher in a world where he might be a figure of the greatest consequence. He is not at all dissatisfied that every one knows and speaks of him as a man possessed of a very opulent fortune, yet affects to look down with scorn on all the pleasures, and even innocent amusements, it might afford him; and to such an excess does he carry this humour, that whatever is beyond the necessities of nature he treats as luxury and epicurisms; vainly imagining that the wearing of a threadbare coat, and a wig that the head it covers scarce remembers ever to have had a curl, entitles him to the character of a philosopher.

But this ostentatious humility, as I think it may be justly called, is not the most unpardonable error into which Hippias is led by his false taste: this serves only to make him ridiculous, but there is another which makes him hateful. The ambition he has of being revered as a Stoick, renders him deaf to the dictates of humanity, and wholly insensible of all social feeling for his fellow-

creatures. He partakes not in the joys or griefs of even those he calls his friends; nor would lift a finger, move a step, or speak a syllable, either to promote the one, or dissipate the other. The most distressful circumstance has not the power to touch his heart; and if any one knows him little enough to employ his assistance or advice in the extremest exigence, he replies, with a solemn and magisterial air, that he can say nothing to their complaints; that pity is a passion; and that, by the force of his reason, he has divested himself of all passions, of what kind soever. Thus does Hippias, by indulging one unhappy propensity, forfeit all the love and esteem the qualities he is possessed of would otherwise attract. The manner in which he is now looked upon gives me room to suspect that, whenever he makes his exit from this world, he will have an epitaph somewhat like what I read on a tomb-stone in a country church-yard—

- ‘ Here ***** stretch’d at his full length,
‘ is laid;
- ‘ Whom, living, no one lov’d, nor mourn’d
‘ when dead.’

Numberless are the instances might be given to prove the best capacities may be, and frequently are, perverted by false taste and misapplication. As one of our most eminent authors tells us, the love of fame is the universal passion; it is imprinted, in a more or less degree, on every human heart. Those who have great talents, are apt to think they can never render themselves sufficiently conspicuous; and those of weaker intellects, yet possessed of the same vanity, are sometimes so infatuated, as, rather than not to make a noise in the world, to do things which may incur a lampoon, since they cannot deserve a panegyrick. A private life, or, as they term it, a life of obscurity, is to some people the severest misfortune they can labour under: they will tell you, that they may as well be out of the world, as of no consequence in it; and few there are who will take the poet’s word for a contrary passion—

- ‘ Th’ unknown, untalk’d of man, is only
‘ blest;
- ‘ No anxious doubts his peaceful breast an-
‘ noy,
- ‘ From praise and censure equally remote;
- ‘ Nor

- * Nor hope, nor fear, his happiness de-
 * stroys,
 * But safe within himself, himself enjoys.'

There are also people who, having no peculiarities of their own, affect to imitate those they may see in others; especially if the person they copy after be of a superior rank, or has the reputation of a wit. These may properly enough be called second-hand fools; for they generally take up the follies just when they are left off by the persons they would be thought exactly to resemble: according to a vulgar adage—
 * The fool will sometimes peep out of
 * the wisest man.' The least failing in a person of distinguished character is presently adopted by his inferiors, till it becomes a fashion. Emulation, however, when well-directed, is one of the most noble propensities of the mind; nothing can be more truly laudable than an endeavour to square our actions by a praise-worthy model: but I am sorry to say, that this is not so often the case as every good man would wish it were.

There are some people so unhappy, as to take for a pattern all the bad they can find, and neglect all the good; and this, too, without design, or any untoward inclination, but through mere carelessness: and, provided they do something such a one or such a one does, give not themselves the trouble to examine whether what they imitate be a beauty or a blemish; or, indeed, whether it be either, or only a matter of indifference, and altogether unworthy of regard. And, now I am upon this head, I cannot forbear relating an example of the sort I last mentioned; which, though it happened some years ago, and is extremely trifling in itself, may serve to shew how little care people sometimes take in their choice of an object for imitation.

A young gentleman of my acquaintance, who passed in the world for a very pretty fellow, either was, or affected to be, because it was the mode, a prodigious admirer of the late deservedly famous Sir Isaac Newton. He had the honour of being known to that truly great man, frequently visited him, and had the opportunity of hearing many things from him, which doubtless were well worthy of being treasured in his memory; yet I could never find he took particular notice of any thing but this I

am now going to repeat. Sir Isaac had him at his table one day, and happened casually to say, that he thought nothing sweeter than a bacon bone. My friend immediately caught up the word, and from that moment made it his own, and on all occasions quoted it. If any one asked him to eat with them, he would reply—'Yes, if you have any bacon; for, as Sir Isaac Newton says, there is 'nothing sweeter than a bacon bone.' In fine, he went to no place, mingled in no conversation, without finding some means to introduce the sweetness of the bacon bone; and repeated the above-mentioned expression so often, and so impertinently, that at last he became the jest of all his companions, who, in derision, called him by no other name than the Bacon Bone. Ridiculous as this may appear, I can assure my reader, that the gentleman I have been speaking of does not stand alone, but has many parallels in my catalogue of observations on a misguided imitation, as I could easily prove; but my humour has on a sudden changed it's vein, and I begin to grow too serious to recite any farther instances of so ludicrous a nature. Degenerate as we mortals are said to be, yet even now there are not wanting some few illustrious examples of both, whom even an endeavour to copy after would be some merit in the attempter.

See where the noble Altamont stands forth a shining pattern of exalted virtue! Dignity in his countenance; benevolence in his hand; the strictest justice, honour, and social kindness, in his heart. Near him you will always find the chaste and fair Euphemia, his illustrious consort; a numerous and beautiful offspring with joyous smiles play round their feet; Juno and Hymen hover over their heads, and shower continual blessings on the happy pair. From Altamont and Euphemia, ye husbands, fathers, learn the duties due to those endearing names, and cease to imagine that to swerve from them is politeness.

Learn you who languish in a widowed bed, from Elismonda learn to support the melancholy of your condition as becomes you—Elismonda, who though, as Lee expresses it, in all the full-grown pride of glorious beauty, disdains all overtures for a second marriage, shuns pomp and ceremony, nor haunts the court nor publick walks; but in her closet ruminates what good is in her power

power to do; who most deserves, and who stands most in need of her relief; and all those cares she once employed to please the best of husbands, are now taken up with acts of piety and soft compassion.

Learn, ye fair rambles after shew and hurry, ye midnight gadders to masquerades and balls, from lovely Amadea learn the timid modesty that best befits and best secures the honour of a virgin state. She takes no pains to attract the eyes of the gaping multitude, and rather shuns than covets popular admiration. She avoids being the first in any new fashion, and never runs into the extremes of it; goes to no routes, assemblies, or masquerades; seldom indulges herself even with a play or opera; and, when she does, is always accompanied by some grave relation, whose presence is a check on the impertinence of those whiffers who skip from box to box, saying the same thing to every fine woman they see there. When she walks in the Park, she makes choice of those hours when the least company are there; and the only publick place you are sure to find her in, is at church.

The example of Dorilaus is a noble reprimand to those who suffer themselves to grow old in riots and debaucheries. Early he quitted the levities of youth; and as the silver swan, emerging from the stream, shakes off the drops that hang upon it's wings, so Dorilaus but dipped into the follies of the times, just tasted the licentious pleasures of the town, then despised and threw them from him with abhorrence. Temptations of every kind have since surrounded him, yet has he still remained unmoved; equally inflexible to the insinuations of luxury, and to the bribes of corruption. Steady in virtuous principles, the evil ones at length grew weary of their fruitless labour, and now suffer him to enjoy a calm and undisturbed repose, in the society of a few select friends, who join with him in commiserating the infatuation of others.

If there were no cards nor dice in the world, Favonius would be looked upon as an almost faultless being, and the voice of envy have nothing wherewith to cast a blemish on his name. It cannot be denied, however, that Favonius has wit, honour, generosity, affability, and an unaffected sweetness of disposition: qualifications which would greatly

compensate for his love of gaming, if it were not for two considerations, which are these. First, That by indulging this unhappy propensity, he lavishes too much of that time which might be employed in the defence of the liberties of his country, and for the benefit of the commonwealth. Secondly, That his high character in the world makes many people ready, and even proud, to follow his example in this the sole error of which he can be accused, while they neglect the least endeavour to imitate any one of the numerous virtues he is master of.

There are many others of both sexes still living, whose characters would reflect honour on the imitators; and some who, though the world has been so unfortunate as to lose, have left behind them such monuments of their virtues as never can be forgotten; their memory strikes a damp on guilt, and will be eternally venerated by all the wise and good. But this is a theme which, though perhaps little affecting to the greatest part of my readers, may yet be too melancholy to some others, as well as to myself; I shall therefore dwell no longer upon it, but return to a subject more suitable to the present disposition of the times, which I am not so ignorant as not to know an author ought always to consult, if he regards either his own reputation, or the interest of his bookseller.

CHAP. VII.

GIVES A SUCCINCT RELATION OF TWO PRETTY EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES THAT PRESENTED THEMSELVES TO THE AUTHOR IN A MORNING RAMBLE.

A Clear and undisturbed sky, illuminated with a smiling sun, and perfumed with a thousand odours from the new-budding spring, invited me to Hyde Park. I girded my invisible Belt about me, for the reasons I have already mentioned in a preceding chapter; and also put my Tablets in my pocket, though I had not the least expectation of meeting with any thing in that place which should give me occasion to make use of them. The sweet solemnity of this solitude afforded me infinitely more pleasure than ever I had found in a crowded Mall: it inspired me with the

most delightful ideas; which indulging, I wandered for I believe near two hours, without meeting with any one object to interrupt my contemplations. How much longer I might have continued in in this agreeable reverie, I know not; for I was roused from it by the sudden appearance of a gentleman at some distance from me, but who was advancing directly towards the path where I was. On his approach, I stepped a little on one side, to prevent his running against me. He walked backwards and forwards with some emotion, looked often on his watch, and discovered many signs of the utmost impatience. By the cockade in his hat, I doubted not of his being a military gentleman, and imagined that some dispute of honour was that morning to be decided by the sword; but I was soon convinced of my mistake, the officer having more of Cupid than of Mars in his head.

I had not been many minutes, before a coach came up, and stopped very near the place where I stood. There were three women in it; one of whom, and much the richest dressed, I presently knew to be the celebrated Lipathea: the others, as I afterwards found, were her woman and nurse; this, it seems, being the first time of her coming abroad since her bringing into the world a son and heir, to the great joy of that honourable family, as the news writers express it. On sight of the coach, the young officer advanced briskly towards it. Lipathea saw him at the same time; and, thrusting out her head, and half her body, with her accustomed loud laugh, called to him to come in. With these words, the door was immediately opened; the two women came out, and the officer jumped in: after which, the coachman was ordered to drive, as slow as he could, to the Walnut-tree Walk, and so round to the Ha-ha Wall, and back to the same place again.

I had no opportunity to follow them, so was obliged to content myself with hearing the discourse that passed between the two women who were left behind. To this end I kept as close to them as I could, with my Tablets in my hand; but the subjects they talked on were so trifling, that I did not think it worth while to spread them for the impression of their words, till all at once the nurse began to run into a long detail of the particulars she knew, or could remember, that

had happened in the several families where she had been; but the matters she related being wholly insignificant, and unworthy of record, I shut up my Tablets, and gave no farther ear to what she said. I quitted not the place, however, till the lovers returned from the tour they had been making. The coach stopped, and the captain was set down near the end of the same path where he had been taken up; and Lipathea beckoned her two attendants to come in, who by this time, I found, were heartily weary of their promenade.

The well-known character of Lipathea, one would think, should have hindered me from being much surprized at any thing she did; yet could I not be an eye-witness of the glaring affront she now put upon her husband, and the modesty of her sex, without being seized with a consternation impossible to be expressed. My meditations on this adventure had perhaps lasted till I came home, if they had not been interrupted by another which fell in my way, and afforded me, in it's consequences, more matter for diversion than the former. Beauty, or what is more than beauty, the power of attraction, is not confined to persons of a high station: Nature can exert herself as much in the cottage as the palace; and we sometimes find more real graces under a plain, homely coif, than under a fine gauze cap ornamented with jewels; as the little incident I am about to rehearse will abundantly evince.

As I was passing through St. James's Park, I met a young woman with a porringer in her hand, neatly covered with a large earthen saucer. She advanced with slow and cautious steps, lest she should spill any part of what she had brought. When she drew near the Parade, a tall grenadier, who I found was her husband, stepped forth from among his comrades, and received the mess from her, as also a pewter spoon, which she took out of her pocket, and gave to him at the same time. Though every thing about her was clean, yet the reader may easily suppose extremely mean: she had a face, however, that stood in need of no advantages from dress to set it off. Never had I seen a finer pair of eyes, or a more soft and delicate complexion; and, to crown all the rest of her perfections, there appeared, not only in her countenance, but in every little motion and gesture, that which, in my opinion, is
the

the very soul of loveliness—a most perfect innocence and simplicity. I was not, however, the only admirer whom her charms had that morning attracted; a certain officer of distinction, walking on the Parade with another gentleman, having seen her at some distance, quitted his companion, and came to the grenadier, accosting him in these terms—

Officer. So, grenadier, you are taking your morning's refreshment. Is this pretty damsel your wife?

Grenadier. Yes, please your honour.

Officer. She seems very young: you can't have been married long.

Grenadier. About three months, please your honour.

Officer. I hope you use her well; I dare say she deserves it.

Grenadier. I think she has no reason to complain, Sir.—Have you, Peggy?

Wife. No, indeed.

Officer. I am glad of it. I would always have the women used well.

He said no more, but turned upon his heel, and walked away with a careless air, as if nothing farther than what he had made shew of was in his head; but I perceived he removed no farther than the end of the Canal, and kept an observant eye on those he had left behind. The grenadier having finished his little repast, mingled with some soldiers who were on the Parade, and his wife tripped out of the Park with much more haste than she had come into it. The officer, who had never lost sight of her, followed, though for a while at some distance; and I kept very near him, resolving to see what it was he aimed at, and what would be the issue of his designs, in case he had any of the nature I suspected. She went through the Treasury; and when he saw she had entered there, he mended his pace; and coming up with her under the arched passage, gave her a little slap on the shoulder: she started, and turned back; but, on seeing him, dropped a low curtsy, while he spoke thus—

Officer. Well-overtaken, pretty lass. I wanted to speak with you: I fancy I have seen you somewhere or other. Pray what countrywoman are you?

Wife. I was born in Lancashire, so please your honour.

Officer. I thought so; for I have heard say all the Lancashire girls are

very handsome. And pray what brought you to London?

Wife. The hopes of getting into a good service, please your honour; but not hearing of one presently, and happening to get acquainted with my husband in the mean time, I changed my condition.

Officer. You did well: there is nothing like being your own mistress. But you country folks are generally afraid of a red coat: how came you to venture on a soldier?

Wife. I don't know, Sir: it was my fate, I think.

Officer. Well, here is something to encourage you to love the army.

With these words he drew a six-and-thirty piece of gold out of his pocket, and made an offer of putting it into her hand; but she drew back, either ashamed or unwilling to accept it, and cried—
'Oh, Sir, I have heard say that women should never take money from the men!' To which he replied—
'That is from your mean, dirty fellows; but it is ill-manners to refuse any thing given you by your superiors.' He now took hold of her hand; and a second effort obliging her to receive his present, she looked on it, turned it two or three times, and then said—
'Bless me! what must I do with this great piece of money?'

Officer. Oh, you will find a use for it; that pretty face of yours requires a thousand things that the grenadier's pay will not enable him to purchase for you. And, now I think on it, 'tis pity he should continue in that low station: I have it in my power to raise him, and I will do it; he shall have a halbert forthwith. But I must talk to you a little first on that score. Where do you live? I will come and see you.

Wife. Oh, dear Sir, we have not a place fit for your honour to come into.

Officer. No matter for that. I am not proud; and never scruple to go to any place, how mean soever it be, where I can either do a pleasure to myself, or a service to my friends; therefore no excuses.

Wife. Your honour is very good. But I do not know how to tell you, for there is no sign near us. We lodge up one pair of stairs, at a button-maker's, the next door but one to a chandler's shop, in a little alley that turns out of King Street by a green stall, and is no thoroughfare.

Officer. I shall never find it by this direction; you shall shew me where it is now.

Wife. Lord, Sir, what will the people in the street say, to see me go cheek-by-jole with such a fine gentleman as your honour?

Officer. Well, then, you shall walk before, and I will follow you.

Wife. But, Sir, my room is all dirty; I was just going home to clean it, now I have carried my husband his breakfast.

Officer. I shall not go in, nor visit you, till after dark; to hinder, as you say, the neighbours from staring at me. I will come this evening, about nine or ten o'clock. Your husband is to be upon duty, but do you take care not to be out of the way; for it is absolutely necessary I should have some discourse with you before I do any thing for him.

Wife. Lord, Sir, what business can your honour have with me that he must not know!

Officer. You may tell him afterwards, if you will. But I won't detain you any longer; go home and please yourself that your husband shall be a serjeant to-morrow, and that I shall raise him still higher, so that he may come to be a captain at last.

Wife. A captain!—Oh la! I should never have thought of such a thing!

Officer. It all depends upon yourself, and what I have to communicate to you; so be sure be at home, and alone when I come.

Wife. Yes, please your honour. I would not, for all the world, be so rude as to disappoint you; though I am ashamed you should come into such a poor habitation as mine.

Officer. Never mind that, my pretty one; I shall look on nothing in the place but yourself.

While he was speaking this, he cast his eyes about, and finding there was nobody in sight, gave her a kiss; after which she made a low curtsy, and turned away to go home, blushing all the way she went like the sun through a gentle shower in an April morning. He followed, as he said he would, till he had seen her enter into her little dwelling; nor left the place, till he had taken sufficient notice of every thing, to be able to remember and know it again. I was now under a most sensible concern for this poor young creature, thus likely to be betrayed; not by any inclination to ill,

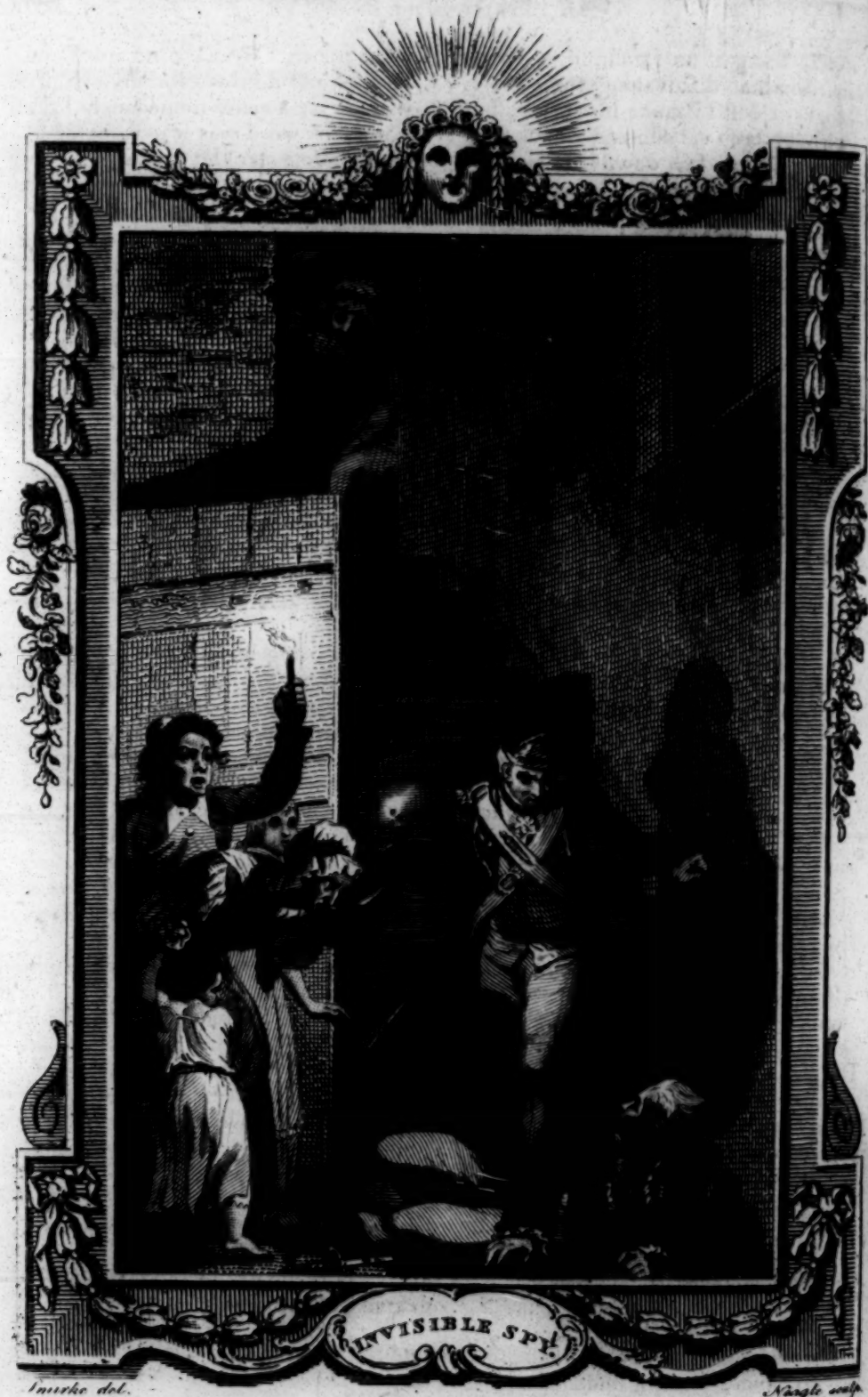
but merely through the fear of offending a person above her: quite ignorant of the snares of the world, and untaught how to resist temptation, she was, alas! just ready to fall into a real fault, by an endeavour to avoid an imaginary one. As Mr. Waller said, though on a different occasion—

'Innocence and youth oft makes,
'In artless virgins such mistakes.'

Though I had not the least doubt but that the young wife of the grenadier would become a prey to the vicious inclination of her seducer, yet I had the curiosity to see in what manner she would behave on the full discovery of his designs upon her. Accordingly, I went about nine o'clock to the little alley, and posted myself on a bench at a door just opposite to the dwelling of the grenadier, resolving to go in with the officer when he should come. I had not waited above half an hour before he appeared: he was muffled up in his cloak; but, by the help of a small winking light from an adjacent shop, I easily knew him. He had taken too much notice of the house to be mistaken in it, and entered directly, the door being left open, as I suppose, for that purpose. I followed close behind him; but never had my Invisibilityship been in so much danger as it was now brought into by this adventure.

The grenadier, it seems, having been informed by his wife of every thing that had passed between her and the officer, and more zealous in the defence of his honour than perhaps some in a much higher station would have been, had prevailed, for some pots of beer, on a brother grenadier to do duty for him that night, so returned home before the hour appointed for his rival's approach; and having armed himself with a good oaken cudgel, stood on the middle of the stairs, ready to give a proper reception to that invader of his rights. My leader had not advanced above five or six steps of the stairs, when he received a violent blow on the head; which, together with the surprize it gave him, made him reel back, and like to fall on the poor Invisible; but I hastily and prudently withdrew to the middle of the entry, and stood aloof, to hear, at a more safe distance, what would be the end of this affair. The grenadier pursued his strokes; and the officer,





Pincho del.

Nagle sculp.

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officer, being in no condition to defend himself in that disadvantageous posture, thought it best to make his escape; but not having been accustomed to such steep winding stairs, fell down to the bottom. His antagonist, though better acquainted with the passage, in attempting to follow him, had the same fate; but being uppermost, soon recovered himself; and catching hold of the officer by the collar as he was endeavouring to rise, forced him on his knees, and continued buffeting him on the head and face till he was covered all over with the blood that gushed from his nose and mouth, as I afterwards perceived.

The officer made several efforts to draw his sword, and at length did so; but the other finding what he was about, immediately seized it by the hilt, wrested it from him, snapped it asunder with his foot, and threw it over his head. 'Rascal, will you murder me!' cried the officer. 'No,' replied the grenadier; 'I will only cool your courage, and make you remember running after other men's wives.'—'Dog! do you know who I am?' demanded he. 'I only know you for a villain,' said the other, 'that would debauch my wife, and as such I'll use you.'—'Sirrah,' returned the officer, 'I will make you pay dearly for this insolence! You know well enough that I am *****.'—'You lye!' rejoined the other, 'and deserve to be hanged for taking such a gentleman's name in your mouth! ***** would scorn to sneak into such a poor hut as this, to seduce any man's wife.' The grenadier's hands were not idle all this time: but the officer having at length got upon his feet, they continued wrestling together for some minutes, in which combat the furious husband had much the better; which put me in mind of what Mr. Rowe says in *Jane Shore*—

'In spite of birth and dignity, a man
'Oppos'd against a man, is but a man.'

The officer now finding himself quite disabled, and being still under the gripe of his unrelenting enemy, called vehemently out for help; on which several of the neighbours ran in with lighted candles in their hands, and the entry was presently full of men, women, and children; but never was such a spectacle as this demolished beau. 'Bless me! what is the matter?' cried one; 'what

'is the matter?'—'Ask no questions. Here is half a crown for any one that will get me a chair immediately,' said he; and the word was scarce out of his mouth, before a cobbler ran with all the speed he could, to do as he desired. The grenadier now affected the utmost surprise, and said—'All the world should never have made me believe it was your honour! I protest I took you for a rogue that wanted to come to bed to my wife while I was abroad, and thought I could not use such a one too ill.' The women, on hearing this, guessed how the business was, and looked at one another, and grinned: one of them, however, was so charitable, as to fetch a bowl of water, to wash the blood off his face and garments. He made use off what she brought, but gave no other answer to what the grenadier had said, than a look full of resentment and confusion.

A chair being brought, he caught up his hat and wig, which had fallen off in the scuffle, went into it, leaving behind him sufficient matter to employ the conversation of the whole alley for a considerable time. On hearing afterwards the whole truth of the affair from the grenadier and his wife, every one applauded the conduct of them both, and laughed heartily at the disappointment and correction of the lascivious officer. For my own part, after I got home, the satisfaction of finding myself safe from the dangers into which my curiosity had brought me, was succeeded by some considerations on the passages I had been witness of; and I could not help being filled with the utmost astonishment, that persons endowed with a liberal education, and from whom much better things might be expected, should, for the sake of gratifying a foolish inclination, the fleeting pleasure of a moment, not only be guilty of the greatest injustice to others, but also of the most abject demeaning of themselves.

CHAP. VIII.

IS CALCULATED RATHER FOR ADMONITION THAN ENTERTAINMENT, AND THEREFORE LIKELY TO BE BUT LITTLE RELISHED.

HOW vainly do we boast the light of reason, when we refuse to submit either our wills or actions to the guidance

guidance of it's direction; when, through every stage of life, we suffer some darling passion to gain dominion over us, and utterly extinguish that glorious lamp we seem so proud of, and would be thought so eminently to possess above the rest of the creation! Prodigality is generally the vice of youth, and avarice of age: but though both these propensities proceed from a wrong turn of mind, and are diametrically opposite to sound judgment, yet I think somewhat more be said in excuse of the one than of the other. The prodigal lavishes his stores in such things as do a pleasure to himself; and if he squanders away his patrimony in riotous living, and becomes miserable in the end, there are some who profit by his misfortunes; his money circulates, and the publick suffer nothing by his private ruin. The miser, on the contrary, not only denies himself all enjoyment of the goods of fortune, but also withholds them, as much as in his power, from every one else: he parts with nothing he can get into his clutches; amasses heaps of treasure; and smiles, with a wicked satisfaction, to see it lie rusting in his coffers, while numbers of his fellow-creatures are perishing for want of it.

Avarice, above all other passions, so takes up the soul, that it leaves not the least room for any of the nobler sensations. Love, friendship, pity, and even natural affection, are excluded thence. The covetous man regards only the gratification of that one sordid view; all his fears, his hopes, his cares, are centered there, and he seldom sticks at any thing to obtain it. Besides, what can be more absurd in itself, than for people to labour with all their might in heaping riches which they neither use, nor can assure themselves but that the next moment may dispossess them of? And it is remarkable, that the nearer they approach to the time when they can expect no other than to be snatched for ever from the idol they had worshipped, they grow the more eager to preserve it. The condition of those children who have the misfortune to be descended from parents of the humour I am speaking of, can never be too much commiserated, especially if they happen to be born with notions more just and elevated; an instance of which kind I am now going to relate.

A gentleman, whom I shall distin-

guish by the name of Avario, is sprung from a very ancient family in the west of England, has a large estate, and might have been beloved and respected by his neighbours, if the excessive parsimoniousness of his disposition did not make him do things which demean his rank, and even render him contemptible in the eyes both of his equals and inferiors. He was married, in his youth, to a lady of birth and fortune, but had no child for near twelve years; at the end of which time, however, she brought a son into the world; which, one would imagine, should have filled the father's heart with the highest satisfaction; but, instead of thanking Providence for sending him an heir of his own bowels for his estate, he only repined at the additional expence the new comer must necessarily occasion. His lady was sensibly afflicted at the little notice he took of the young Clyamon, for so the son of this unworthy father was called; but when she reproached him with his unkindness, he only gave her this churlish answer—That he saw no cause for any great rejoicing; for he supposed, as she had now began to teem, he should in a few years have more children than he should be able to maintain.

Clyamon, notwithstanding, grew a very fine boy; but would have had little to boast of from education, if his uncle by the mother's side, who was exceeding rich, and had no children, had not conceived a more than ordinary affection for him, and resolved to bestow on him all those advantages which were denied to him by the niggard disposition of his father. He told Avario, that if he would trust him with his son, he would breed him as his own, and take care he should want for none of those accomplishments which constitute the truly fine gentleman, in case he were capable of receiving them; 'Which,' added he, 'I do not at all doubt of, from the early promise of his childhood.' This offer was too agreeable to both the parents not to be readily accepted: the father rejoiced at being eased of an expence he could not foresee without regret; and the mother was highly pleased to think that her little darling would now receive a more polite education than she could hope the too great frugality of her husband would have allowed him.

Clyamon was about ten years of age when Sir Arthur Frankwill, for so this worthy

worthy uncle was called, took him under his protection, and carried him to a fine seat he had about twelve miles distant from Avario's. Doubly happy for him was now this change in his situation; for his mother dying soon after his removal, he would doubtless have been deprived of many indulgences he had hitherto enjoyed at home, but which were abundantly made up to him by the tender affection he was treated with by the good baronet. Sir Arthur, not approving of any of the schools in that part of the country, sent him to Eton, under the conduct of a faithful old servant; and in that place it was he received his first rudiments of learning. The improvements he made there were such as did honour to the masters, as well as to his own capacity. The accounts those gentlemen gave of him, in their letters to Sir Arthur, were confirmed by their pupil's behaviour whenever the times of breaking up gave him the liberty of going into the country. Both uncle and father were surprized on finding the swift progress he made in his learning; the one was charmed with the success of his endeavours, and the other quite transported that his son was in a fair way of being possessed of so many accomplishments without any cost to himself.

Having perfected himself in all he could be taught at Eton, he quitted the school, by his uncle's permission, and returned to the west; where, after having staid some time to make an acquaintance with the gentry, and take such diversions as the country afforded, his uncle thought proper he should finish his studies at one of the universities, and, for some reasons which he had within himself, made choice of Oxford. Clyamon accordingly went thither at the age of eighteen, and had the good fortune to have for his tutor a gentleman of deep learning, a keen discernment, and an unprejudiced judgment; who inspired him with such principles of justice and true honour as I believe he will never depart from. The admonitions of this worthy tutor, joined to a natural love of virtue in himself, entirely preserved him from running into any of those excesses too many of his age are guilty of: though nothing could be more gay and spirituous, yet every thing he said or did was governed by a certain decorum, without seeming to be so. He could be

cheerful among the men of his acquaintance, without immorality or profaneness; courtly among the ladies, without flattery or insincerity; respectful to his superiors, and maintain a proper distance to those below him without pride or ill-nature. In fine, his character and manners were such as made him highly esteemed by all the wise and good, and beloved even by those who would not be at the pains to imitate him.

After a stay of about three years at the university, he returned to Sir Arthur's; for that kind uncle and patron would needs have him continue to look upon his house as his chief home: nor did Avario at all oppose this motion, though he was now extremely proud of his son, went often to see him, and would always make him be present at every publick assembly or meeting in which he was himself a party. It is certain, indeed, never any young gentleman was more happy or contented in his mind than Clyamon at the time I am speaking of; he had but one wish beyond what he already possessed, and that remained no longer ungratified than while he forbore to mention it. He was as well acquainted, as books could make him, with most foreign parts, especially with those kingdoms and states which compose this quarter of the globe; but when he considered that the best description cannot but fall infinitely short of the prospect, he was very desirous of being an eye-witness of those things and places he had read of.

Sir Arthur highly approved of his nephew's inclination to travel; it seemed laudable to him, as he had himself often thought it was the only thing wanting to compleat his other accomplishments: and one day, as they were talking on that subject—'My dear Clyamon,' said he, 'the desire you have of seeing the world is truly praise-worthy, and I think you cannot better employ two or three of those years which I hope Heaven has allotted for you, than in visiting the several courts of Europe: it will enlarge your ideas; and the difference of their manners and policies will, I doubt not, enable you to make such observations as may hereafter be of service to your country. I think,' pursued he, 'there is no necessity for putting you under the care of any person by way of governor; you are now arrived at years, and, I

flatter

‘ flatter myself, at discretion enough to be
 ‘ trusted by yourself: as to the rest, you
 ‘ may depend that I shall spare nothing
 ‘ to render the tour you make agreeable
 ‘ to you; and that, whatever remit-
 ‘ tances you shall have occasion for,
 ‘ from time to time, shall be punctually
 ‘ sent to you, on a letter of advice.’

This crowned all the other favours Clyamon had received from his indulgent uncle; and, it is not to be doubted, drew from him the most grateful acknowledgments. It was necessary, however, Avario should be consulted: the matter accordingly was proposed to him; on which he testified that he was not void of natural affection, by the reluctance he expressed for exposing so deserving a son to the dangers of travelling; but the arguments urged by Sir Arthur, and the entreaties of Clyamon, at length prevailed on him to consent. Clyamon soon made it appear that it was not to gratify a vain, unprofitable curiosity, but the laudable ambition of improving his mind, that had made him so desirous of going abroad. The letters he wrote to his father and uncle, from France, Italy, Sweden, and several parts of Germany, would have been very well worth inserting in this work; but, to the misfortune of the publick, I was not then in possession of my wonderful Tablets; and though I heard them read more than once, can remember little of the particulars they contain. This worthy young gentleman had gleaned from every field he passed through whatever he found capable of increasing the treasures of his mind; and, in somewhat more than two years, returned to England, full fraught, though not burthened, with understanding, and an experience far above his years.

I might here entertain my reader with the joy he was received with by his father and uncle, the compliments made to him by the gentry in that part of the country, and acclamations of the lower sort of people; but I have no time to waste in such minute particulars, and must proceed to more material circumstances. Clyamon had no great relish for the country; he soon grew weary of it's amusements: he loved company, and had been accustomed to a good deal, both at Oxford, as well as while he was on his travels; and, on account of the great distance between the gentlemen's seats in that country, his uncle's love

of retirement, and his father's parsimony, neither of their houses were much frequented. He wanted to come to London; he had never been three whole weeks together in it, and thought he ought to be better acquainted with what was done in the capital of the kingdom. Sir Arthur was also willing he should be known in a place where the accomplishments he had given him might be rendered more conspicuous; but as he had more than performed the part of an uncle, and fully discharged him of the promise he had made to Avario concerning his education, he thought it was now high time for that gentleman to take upon him the father, and make a settlement for his son sufficient to enable him to appear in the world, according to the estate he was born to inherit. This proposition was not altogether so pleasing to Avario as it ought to have been; but as he could find nothing to alledge against the reasonableness of it, he only evaded complying with it at present by some trifling excuse or other, till Clyamon, unable to conceal his discontent, Sir Arthur pressed more strenuously in his favour than he had done before, and at length, though with much difficulty, drew from that niggardly parent the scanty sum of fifty guineas. This was a light loading for the purse of a young gentleman bred in the manner Clyamon had been, and could not be expected to hold out long in so expensive a town as London. Avario, however, accompanied it with a promise of letting him have more as soon as he received money from his tenants, who, he pretended, had been tardy in their payments of late, and occasioned his being very much out of cash.

Clyamon could not keep himself from being extremely shocked at this treatment from a father who had been at no expence for him since he was ten years old. Sir Arthur was no less chagrined, though he concealed it from his nephew; and putting a Bank bill of fifty pounds into his hand, said to him—
 ‘ My dear Clyamon, I would not have
 ‘ you be disconcerted. You know your
 ‘ father's temper; but the more he
 ‘ hoards, the more will be your own at
 ‘ his decease. In the mean time, be
 ‘ assured I will not forsake you; I will
 ‘ continually urge him on your behalf,
 ‘ and also privately supply you when-
 ‘ ever he is deficient: live therefore like
 ‘ yourself,

, yourself, and be entirely easy.' These comfortable words, from a mouth on which he knew he might depend, made Clyamon set out cheerfully for London; but what happened to him after his arrival, must be the subject of another chapter.

CHAP. IX.

IS A CONTINUANCE OF WHAT THE FORMER BUT BEGAN.

THOUGH Clyamon never had an opportunity of making much acquaintance in this metropolis, and now arrived here at a season in which great part of the nobility and gentry retire to their country seats, yet was he soon known, and his conversation courted by those of the best rank who still remained in town. There were no operas indeed, no plays, no masquerades, to entertain him, but the gardens of Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and Mary-le-bon; or, to speak more properly, the gay company that frequent those places left him no want of any other amusement. The love of pleasure can never continue ungratified in a town like this; and it is not to be wondered at, if it sometimes got the better of all Clyamon's discretion; nor, if surrounded with temptations, that he could not always keep himself from giving way to passions which, in youth, and a sprightly disposition, are so natural, that they scarce deserve the name of faults. It is not my business to detain the reader's attention with an account of his gallantries with the fair-sex, if any of the particulars had come to my knowledge, which I freely confess they did not; I shall only say, that he had no amour which could call his honour in question, bring him into quarrels, or be productive of any other unhappy consequences.

The only mistake in conduct he had any great reason to repent of, he was led into more by the prevalence of example than inclination. He had never been in the least tainted with that epidemick vice the love of gaming, and rather wondered at the pleasure he saw it give others, than desired to be a partaker of it himself; yet did he inadvertently suffer himself one evening to engage in a party at that dangerous amusement, which he knew had proved so fa-

tal to many of the most opulent fortunes, and utterly unsuitable to a person in his present circumstances. The persons he played with were well experienced, and great proficient in their arts: they let him win at first some pieces; and this imaginary success luring him to go on, he became at length a loser of about seventy pounds; a trifling sum to a gentleman of his appearance, yet three times more than he at that time was master of.

He dissembled his chagrin as well as he was able, but confessed he had not that sum about him, and would send it the next morning: on which they told him his honour was a sufficient stake for ten times as much as he had lost, and would fain have prevailed with him to have played on; but he now saw the folly he had been guilty of, so pretending he had business, took leave of the company, carrying with him a humour very different from what he had brought, and from what he had ever been possessed of in his whole life before. Impossible is it to express, as he afterwards told me, how much he was disconcerted at this unlucky event: he knew it was expected he should promise to send the money next morning, and by what means he should acquit himself of that promise, and redeem his honour, puzzled him to a degree that made him almost distracted. He has often protested that he never closed his eyes in sleep during that whole night, but passed his restless hours in contriving how to extricate himself from the labyrinth into which he had so foolishly strayed. After much revolving in his mind, he at last bethought himself of borrowing the sum he wanted of a young gentleman with whom he was extremely intimate, and had a good fortune.

Pursuant to this resolution, he rose the next morning more early than he was accustomed, and went to his friend, who was not yet stirring; but on saying he had business of importance to impart to him, was easily admitted to his chamber. He told him, in few words, what had happened, the vexatious situation he was in, and the necessity he was under of borrowing a small sum, till he could receive a remittance from the country; to which the other replied—'Upon my soul, dear Clyamon, I should be glad to serve you on this occasion, but, faith, it is not in my power at present; it is not a week ago since I lost five hundred

‘ hundred pounds at that damned whiff;
 ‘ and this, with some other demands
 ‘ lately made upon me, have quite
 ‘ drained me of all my ready cash. But
 ‘ I will tell you what I can do for you;
 ‘ I know a man who has often supplied
 ‘ me, and several of my acquaintance,
 ‘ when they have had a bad run at play.
 ‘ He has always money by him, and
 ‘ will lend you what sum you please on
 ‘ your advancing a premium. I will
 ‘ rise this minute, and go with you to
 ‘ him.’

Clyamon was highly pleased at this offer; and, while the other was dressing, reflecting within himself how his affairs stood, and that the little presents he had received from his father and uncle being now almost exhausted, he should soon have calls for more money than his gaming debt; thought it best, since he must borrow, to borrow as much as would supply his expences till his father should be prevailed upon to make him a settlement, which he flattered himself would be in a short time. He communicated his intention to the gentleman, who approved it; and having got himself ready, they went together to old Grub, for so the usurer was called. The wretch was just coming out of his house when they came to it. On seeing them, he turned back, and conducted them into a little dirty parlour; but as the discourse that passed between them was somewhat extraordinary, I thought it worth writing down, as Clyamon some time after repeated it to me word for word.

Grub. So, my young squire!—’Tis a wonder to see you out of your bed before the sun has run three quarters of his course at least. I suppose you want a little of my assistance; that brings you abroad thus early.

Gentleman. No, faith, Grub, not at present; but I have a friend here that does.

Grub. Your friend is welcome; I will serve him if I can.—Pray, Sir, what can I do for you?

Clyamon. Sir, a present emergency lays me under a necessity of raising two hundred pounds immediately; if you have that sum by you, this gentleman will inform you who I am, and that I want neither the power nor the will to discharge any obligation I shall enter into on that score.

Gentleman. Aye, aye, Grub, his

note is as good as the Bank of England; you need not fear your money. His name is ****; he is an only son, and heir to near two thousand pounds a year.

Grub. The gentleman has an honest face, indeed.

Gentleman. If you have any scruple, Grub, I will join in the note with all my soul.

Grub. I believe there is no great occasion; only in case of accidents a collateral security may be necessary.

Gentleman. Well, well, you shall have it.

Grub. I suppose, Sir, you have acquainted the gentleman with the common way of dealing in these affairs?

Clyamon. Sir, I am willing to allow you any interest for your money that you can in reason desire.

Grub. Sir, I am never out of reason with any man. As to interest, it is quite out of the question; I shall take no more than what the law allows: but when we advance money upon a pinch, a certain premium is expected.

Clyamon. Please to name it.

Grub. Let me see—you want two hundred pounds immediately, you say. It is but a trifling sum, indeed; but too much for a poor man like me to lose: we who lend money this way run a great risque. Not that I doubt you, nor am unwilling to advance the money; but I think you can do no less than add an odd fifty in the note you make.

Clyamon. How, Sir! fifty pounds for the loan of two hundred, besides the interest!

Grub. Lookye, Sir, I would not have you imagine I deal hardly with you. If you brought me a note on the best tradesman in the city, payable one month after date, I do assure you that I would not discount it a farthing less than twenty per cent. Consider, Sir, I may lie a great while out of my money. Disappointments sometimes happen; and when they do, I have not the heart to be severe in point of time; I scorn to distress a gentleman when I find he has it not in his power to pay, unless I hear he is going out of the kingdom, or to enter into the army; and then, indeed, it behoves me to take care of myself.

Clyamon, in favouring me with the recital of this dialogue, told me, that he had not presence enough of mind to keep the shock he felt at so exorbitant a demand

mand from being visible to the usurer; who looking on him with no very pleasing aspect, said to him—

Grub. I perceive you are dissatisfied, Sir; and if so, I can keep my money, and you may try to supply yourself at a cheaper rate elsewhere. For my part, I am at no loss how to dispose of the little I have: there are enow will be glad to receive it on the terms I offered you; and, it may be, not grumble to allow me a better advantage.

Gentleman. Nay—pshaw—pr'ythee, Grub, don't be out of humour! My friend is not accustomed to these things, and I had not time to inform him before we came.

Grub. Sir, I bear a conscience, and am above imposing on any one. I am ashamed to think of what is practised at some great coffee-houses that shall be nameless; where, if a gentleman is necessitated to borrow ten pieces, he returns twenty for it the next morning, or, it may be, the same night. No, no; such things are an abomination to me: I desire no more than a living profit; and whoever does not approve of my conditions, is at liberty to reject them; there is no harm done.

Clyamon. Not in the least, Sir: and as this is the first time I ever had occasion to become a borrower, and was utterly ignorant of the methods I should take in such a situation, I may deserve forgiveness.

Thus was poor Clyamon compelled, by his impatience to discharge his debt of honour, to acquiesce to the excuse made for him by his friend, and comply with the extortioner's demand. On which Grub was easily brought into temper again; a note was presently drawn for two hundred and fifty pounds; and being signed by both the gentlemen, the whole sum mentioned in it was delivered to Clyamon, who put two hundred pounds into his pocket, and returned the other fifty to Grub: 'This, Sir,' said the old wary curmudgeon, 'I receive as a present from you, and thank you for it.' Clyamon also, in his turn, thanked him for the favour he had just conferred upon him; after which they departed, seemingly with the most perfect good-will towards each other: but it is a truth almost unquestionable, that the lender of this money had infinitely more satisfaction in his mind than the borrower could possibly have. Dear-

ly, indeed, did he pay for the means of discharging an obligation which his inadvertency had brought him under: it was, however, of this service to him, that it made him detest high gaming ever since, and careful to avoid all company that might draw him into a second misfortune of the same kind; as I remember to have formerly read in a very old, and now almost exploded author—

'Wife is the man who, by one error taught,
'No more is in the same temptation caught.'

There is a way of refraining from being guilty of indiscreet actions, without affecting to be over wise. Clyamon had this happy talent. He knew very well, that for a person of his years to set up for a dictator, instead of reforming his companions, would only incur their ridicule; and therefore contented himself with not making a party in the modish vices and follies he was spectator of, without seeming to condemn or be displeased at them. Conscious that, on his first arrival in town, he had not taken all the care he should have done to regulate his way of living according to his present circumstances, he began to retrench his expences as much as possibly he could, without letting the world see he did so, or sinking too much beneath the character of a gentleman born to inherit the ample fortune he was. But in spite of this somewhat too late assumed oeconomy, he soon found himself in a very great necessity for a fresh supply. He had been in London from the latter end of May to the beginning of October, and had received no remittances from the country since he left it. All his uncle's remonstrances had not yet prevailed upon his father to make the proposed settlement on him: the usurer's loan was quite exhausted; and he had, besides, other small debts to his tradesmen, some of whom had already sent in their bills.

To add to these vexations, Grub visited him almost every day, complained he was out of cash himself, and at length grew very importunate, and plainly told him, that he could lie no longer out of his money, and that if he did not speedily discharge the note, he must take proper measures to force him to it. In this exigence, he wrote a very pressing letter to his father, intreating an order on his banker in London: but the obdurate

Avario only sent him an answer to this effect; that it was inconvenient for him to break into the sum in the hands of his banker; said he must wait awhile; that he should be in town himself the ensuing November, on the meeting of parliament, and that then he would do something for him: in the mean time bid him live sparingly, and shun all places and company that might draw him into any unnecessary expence.

Poor Clyamon had need enough for all that stock of spirits which nature had endued him with, to enable him to bear up amidst the persecutions of his voracious creditors, and the unnatural behaviour of his father. He had now no other resource remaining, than an application to Sir Arthur; but very loth he was to be troublesome to that dear and beneficent uncle, to whom alone he was indebted for what he looked upon as infinitely more valuable than his being, his education; and was with much debate within himself, whether it were not better to endure the insults he was exposed to, rather than run the risque of displeasing a patron he had so much cause to love and reverence. But while he continued thus irresolute in his mind, an accident happened which put a final end to all the contention in his thoughts on that score, by presenting him with a misfortune, which was the more severe, by it's being sudden and unapprehended.

The good Sir Arthur Frankwill died: Fate snatched him from the world at once, without the least previous warning; and allowed no time for the making bequests, either to his beloved Clyamon, or any other person, who else he might have thought worthy of a place in his remembrance; so that leaving no will behind him, his whole estate, together with all the personal effects he was possessed of, devolved on a son of his elder sister, as being the first of blood, and heir at law; a gentleman who had always looked upon Clyamon with too envious an eye to have any sincere friendship for him. The first account of this misfortune was transmitted to Clyamon in a letter from the above-mentioned kinsman, and contained the following lines—

‘DEAR COUSIN,

‘THIS comes to acquaint you with the loss we both sustain by the death of our dear uncle, who departed

‘this life six days ago. He was seized with an apopleckick fit, out of which he never recovered, in spite of all the endeavours that could be used. I did not send to desire your company at the funeral, as it would have been a superfluous compliment to him, and a great fatigue and expence to yourself in coming so long a journey; but as I am sensible of the affection he had always for you, I inclose a Bank bill of twenty pounds for mourning. I intend to dispose of my uncle's house as soon as I can hear of a purchaser, and am now sending away all the furniture, so can make no invitation to you to come hither; but shall be glad if you pass a few days with me at T—, on your return into the country. So the hurry I am in at present, permits me to add no more, than that I am, &c.

‘G. HAWKSMORE.’

It is certain, at this time, and indeed almost at any other, there were few things could have happened more unfortunately for Clyamon than the death of his uncle; as he had not only lost in him an indulgent parent, a tender friend, and a kind protector, who had promised never to forsake him, but also the only person in the world who had the most influence over his father, and by whose intercession he hoped to have been soon relieved from the precarious situation he was at present in. He had scarce time enough to recover himself from the first emotions of grief, on the above-mentioned melancholy account, when he received private intelligence that Grub intended to arrest him, and had even employed a sheriff's officer for that purpose. He had no way to prevent this affront but by flying for refuge to the verge of the court; which he accordingly did, and took a lodging in Scotland Yard. Grub soon heard of his retreat; traced him to his asylum; and endeavoured, by all the means he could, to render it of no service to him: but Clyamon had laid his case before the board of green cloth, who had assured him of their protection, till the arrival of his father should discharge this troublesome affair.

The time was now near in which Avario was expected, and he staid not many days beyond it; but his presence rather augmented, than put an end to the

the distress of Clyamon. That unnatural parent, on finding the condition he was in, flew into the extremest rage; reproached his extravagancies, as he called them, in the most bitter terms; swore he would see him sink under the calamity to which he had reduced himself, rather than give a single guinea to relieve him from it; and even cursed the memory of the good Sir Arthur, for having indulged him, as he said, in notions so contrary to what he ought to have been inspired with. It was in vain that Clyamon endeavoured to alleviate his fury; he would hearken to no excuses, be softened by no submissions he could make. One of the gentlemen of the honourable board, at Clyamon's request, urged the defence of that young gentleman in the strongest terms; but Avario for many days continued deaf to all remonstrances in his behalf, and gave no other answer, than that, as his son had brought himself into this trouble by his folly, he must endeavour to get out of it by his wit. This cruel sarcasm, when repeated to Clyamon, made him almost forget the duty of a son; and, as he confessed to me, ready to burst into exclamations which he would afterwards have reproached himself for having been guilty of uttering, or even thinking of.

Grub, and some other of his creditors, finding they could do no more to him in the place where he was, took their revenge in persecuting him with unceasing clamours; which threw him sometimes into such fits of melancholy, that if he had not been furnished with a great stock of morality and good sense, would doubtless have pushed him on some desperate method to end those misfortunes which he saw no probability of being removed from. Avario, in the mean time, notwithstanding his churlish and sordid disposition, was far from being easy in his mind. The first gust of passion being blown over, the merits of Clyamon rose in opposition to the fault he had been guilty of, and made it by degrees seem less; he could not forbear remembering that he was his son, and such a son as every one who was a father wished his own might copy after. In fine, nature and reason joined their forces, and pleaded strongly in behalf of Clyamon, and almost wrought him to forgiveness; but as often as he reflected how much it would cost to pardon him,

and that he could not receive him into favour without payment of his debts, the thoughts of parting with his money gave a sudden check to his paternal inclinations.

At length, however, some hints which Clyamon dropped in one of the many petitionary letters he sent to him, making him apprehensive that the most dreadful consequences might attend the despair of his offending son, he became determined to do something for him. He sent a person to him with ten guineas for his present support, and an offer of making up his affairs, in case he could prevail on his creditors to compound for the one half of what was owing to them. Clyamon accepted of his father's present, trifling as it was, with submission; but could not forbear testifying the utmost disdain at proposing of a composition; for besides being certain that it would never be complied with, the thing itself appeared to him so abject, that he chose to suffer any thing rather than demean himself to mention it. This refusal put Avario into a second flame; but he soon cooled again: and, after some little conflict within himself, the necessity there was of restoring the liberty of an only son, got the better of his love of money. Leth, however, to part with his darling pence as long as there was a possibility of keeping them, he found out an expedient to protract the doing a thing so irksome to him: he communicated his intentions to Clyamon in a letter, which that young gentleman shewing me afterwards, I found contained words to this effect—

SON,
 'THOUGH I have been justly irritated against you, first by your extravagancies, and since by your late obstinacy, yet I cannot forget I am your father, nor suffer you to sink beneath those misfortunes your folly and disobedience have brought you into. I have resolved to pay all your debts before I leave London; but as it is not convenient for me to do it sooner, would not have you venture out of the verge, for fear of bringing yourself into disgrace, and an additional expence on me for your release. In the mean time, am content to allow you two guineas and a half per week, for the subsistence of yourself and servant. It is expected we shall

• shall be dissolved about the middle of
 • February, when writs will be issued
 • out for a new election; and I shall
 • then set you clear in the world, and
 • take you home with me; for I do not
 • think it advisable you should live in
 • this luxurious town, till you are bet-
 • ter acquainted with the true value of
 • money than you seem to be at present.
 • I hope, notwithstanding, that your
 • future behaviour will atone for the er-
 • rors of the past, and I shall have no oc-
 • casion to repent the proof I now give
 • you of being your affectionate father,

‘AVARIO.’

The joy Clyamon would have felt, on finding full satisfaction would be given to the demands of his impatient creditors, was very much abated by the thoughts of being obliged to reside constantly with his father in the country; as the manner in which he knew he must live would be very disagreeable to his humour, and widely different from what he had been accustomed to with his uncle. It also seemed a little hard to him, that by delaying the discharge of his debts till his departure, he should be secluded from all enjoyment of the pleasures of the town, even while he continued in it: but he saw into the policy of his father in doing this; and, as there was no remedy, endeavoured to be as contented as possible. In the answer he gave to his father's letter, he expressed himself in terms highly pleasing to him, and brought on a perfect reconciliation, as will presently appear, on occasion of an accident which happened soon after.

CHAP. X.

CONCLUDES A NARRATIVE WHICH HAS SOMEWHAT IN IT THAT WILL, IN A MANNER, COMPEL THOSE WHO SHALL BE MOST OFFENDED TO COUNTERFEIT AN APPROBATION, FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR OWN REPUTATION.

THOUGH the greatest intimacy with Clyamon, and a long acquaintance with Avario, made me no stranger even to the minute particulars of the transaction I am relating—I mean as far as I could be informed by the perfect confidence with which I was ho-

noured by both these gentlemen—yet, as no sure dependance can be placed either on what people say of themselves, or the report given of them by others, I should never have ventured to speak so positively in many things as I have done, if the gift of Invisibilty had not afforded me an opportunity of accompanying them when they thought themselves entirely alone, and of beholding them in those unguarded attitudes which are the best and only certain discoverers of the inward workings of the human mind.

It was my dear Belt could have alone convinced me that, contrary to the general opinion of the world, it was not ill-nature in Avario, or the ignorance of what he ought to do, which had hindered him from being an affectionate husband, a tender father, a faithful friend, and an indulgent master; but merely his inordinate love of money, and an unaccountable apprehension of being reduced to the want of it, that made him center his whole cares in his bags, regardless of all the ties of blood and nature, and rendered him almost incapable of practising any social virtue.

It was by this beneficial present that I became assured Clyamon was much more worthy than he took any pains to appear; that in all serious matters he was steady and unshaken, and in his pleasures decent and well-mannered; and that, young as he was, he had set up a tribunal in his own heart, where reason presiding as his sole judge, carefully examined all his actions, and whatever unruly passion had got the start, stopped it in it's career, and brought it back to obedience.

Many interesting circumstances relating to this affair between father and son, are lost to the publick by my having been deprived for some time of my Chrystaline Tablets, which had been stolen from me, with several other things of much less, though more seeming value, by an unfaithful servant; but the villain finding, I suppose, that he could make nothing of the Tablets, and looking upon them only as a curiosity which would please nobody so much as myself, sealed them up, and caused them to be left for me at a coffee-house. My joy at getting them again, made me forgive the rest of the robbery, and seek no farther after the thief. I recovered my purloined treasure just about the time that

that Clyamon was in the above-mentioned situation; so that what remains to be recited of this narrative, will be chiefly taken from the mouths of the persons concerned in it. I was one morning in Clyamon's apartment, under the cover of my Belt, when a young gentleman of the name of Careless came to visit him. After exchanging the *bon jour*, and some other customary salutations, Careless began the conversation between them in these terms—

Careless. Where do you think I was yesterday?

Clyamon. I am no conjuror.

Careless. Guess.

Clyamon. It would be a needless trouble; pr'ythee spare it me.

Careless. Why, faith, in the gallery of the House of Commons.

Clyamon. The House of Commons! It must be a business of vast importance sure, that could carry a fellow of thy gay, sprightly temper, into that grave, venerable place.

Careless. No, thank Heaven! business and I are perfect strangers to each other; but I had an hour or two upon my hands, and went thither merely to kill time: but was never more diverted in my whole life, than to see how some young members, who had got their heads together, and were giggling over a copy of verses inscribed to Fanny Murray, were put to silence in an instant, and looked as silly as a school-boy under the lash of correction, on the speaker's crying out, with an audible and austere voice—'To order, gentlemen!—for shame!—to order.'

Clyamon. Methinks, indeed, they might have found a more proper place and time for laughter. Was my father in the house, pray?

Careless. O yes; and I assure you the old gentleman made as wise a figure as any there: he said nothing indeed, but sat as serious as a judge upon a criminal cause, leaning both his hands upon his gold headed cane, and his chin upon his hands, and listening with great attention to a very long, and, I suppose, learned harangue, of a leading member.—How do you design to dispose of yourself to-day?

Clyamon. I have not yet considered.

Careless. 'Tis a glorious morning!—Are you for the Park? I come on purpose to ask you.

Clyamon. With all my heart.

Careless. Come along, then. I dare swear the Mall is half full by this time. Let us go, and laugh at the great vulgar and the small, as Cowley says.

Just as they were going out of the room, a letter was presented to Clyamon from his father; which he turning back to read, I stepped behind him, and found it contained these lines—

'DEAR CLY,

'I Have something to impart to you, which is of the utmost consequence to my peace of mind, and your future happiness: be careful, therefore, not to be out of the way to-morrow morning, when I shall call upon you as I go to the House; for what I have to propose cannot be settled too soon. Be assured I am impatient to see you make as good a figure in the world as I think you deserve; and that no more is required of you, than a just sense of your duty to me, and a regard for what is your own interest, to preserve me always your very indulgent and loving father,

'AVARIO.'

Clyamon was so transported with the kindness of this epistle, that he could not forbear shewing it to Careless; who, knowing the temper of Avario, had no sooner looked over, than he said—

Careless. I will lay my life upon it, that the old gentleman has found out some rich widow or heiress for you, with whose fortune you may make a figure in the world, and save his own till he can keep it no longer.

Clyamon. I hope not so, for as yet I have no inclination to marry; and, whenever I do, shall like to have a wife of my own chusing.

Careless. You must be cautious, nevertheless, not to venture a second *brulé* with him; for he seems to have set his heart very much upon this business, whatever it is that he has now got into his head.

Clyamon. Deuce take you for putting it into mine! But I will think no more on it. If the thing should be as you imagine, I shall have time enough to be uneasy after knowing it. But come, 'tis almost two o'clock; let us away.

With these words they went to the Mall, and I returned home; where reflecting, as I always did after these excursions, on what I had seen and heard, I could

I could not help being of the same opinion with Mr. Careless, as touching the intentions of Avario; and feared that poor Clyamon, with all his merit, would be obliged to become a prey to some old well-jointured Jezebel, or rich dowdy who owed her virginity to her ugliness. By what I have often freely confessed concerning the inquisitiveness of my disposition, the reader will easily suppose I felt no small impatience for the event of Avario's visit to his son; and indeed, I believe that young gentleman himself could scarce be more anxious. That I might lose nothing of what should pass between them, I took care to post myself very early in Clyamon's apartment; and it was well I did so, both for the satisfaction of my own curiosity, and the emolument of the publick, for Avario came in presently after me.

As they had not seen each other for some time, Clyamon threw himself on his knees, and in that posture thanked his father for the pardon he had vouchsafed to his offence, as well as for his kind promise he had given for the discharge of his debts. Avario seemed very much pleased with this submission, raised and embraced him with great affection; and, after they were seated, replied to what he had said in these terms—

Avario. It is a great deal of money, indeed, the folly you have been guilty of will cost me; but it is the first, and, I flatter myself, will be the last I shall have to complain of: so we will say no more of what is past. I came now to talk with you on a subject more agreeable to us both.

Clyamon. I have the greatest reason in the world, Sir, to hope every thing from your goodness.

Avario. Aye, Clyamon, you are my only son. You may be sure I have nothing so much at heart as your welfare, and I think I have now hit upon something that will make you as happy as you can wish to be. Your late uncle, Sir Arthur, was always teasing me on the score of a constant allowance for you out of my estate, to the end you may be in a manner independent, and I have at length resolved to do it.

Clyamon. Whatever you are pleased to grant, Sir, I shall take care to employ so as to give you no cause to repent your bounty.

Avario. But that is not all, Clya-

mon: what I shall do for you will put you in a way of making yourself a much greater man than you would be by what you will enjoy on my decease.

Clyamon. I am not ambitious, Sir; but shall readily embrace any laudable means of raising my fortune.

Avario. Why, that's well said; and what I have to propose is not only laudable, but honourable too. It is this; you shall be a member of the House of Commons.

Clyamon. Sir, I should be proud to serve my country in any capacity; but in this, fear my youth and inexperience will be very just objections.

Avario. Tut, tut! there are much younger than you in the House; and, though I say it, of much less understanding too. As to the forms that are to be observed there, I can instruct you in them; and as to the rest, you will easily come into it yourself; therefore no more of such idle scruples: an over-modesty and diffidence of yourself is the worst quality a man that aims to rise in the world can be possessed of. I have considered on this matter in all its circumstances, before I mentioned it to you; and, in order to qualify you for a member, have resolved to assign over to you five hundred pounds per annum of my estate.

Clyamon. That, Sir, is more than I could have presumed to ask.

Avario. I mean, the rents of so much shall be received in your name; as to the cash, I think it much safer in my own hands than yours; but you shall want nothing that is necessary: and when the business of parliament calls you to London, give you leave to draw upon me for what sum, or sums, you shall find occasion for, in reason.

Clyamon. This, Sir, is far from putting me out of a state of dependance.

Avario. You ought not to desire it. Your uncle talked foolishly, very foolishly, on this head; and if it had not been for the obligation I had to him on the score of your education, I should have told him so. A son ought always to be dependant on his father; and I think you have very great cause to be content in being so, as you have experienced the paternal affection I have for you, by my readiness to forgive your faults, and to discharge those debts your extravagancies had contracted.

Clyamon. Sir, I shall always retain a grateful

grateful sense of all you have done for me. But pray, Sir, since it is your pleasure that I should be a candidate at the ensuing election, what place have you in your eye for me? I suppose for some borough.

Avario. No, no; for our own country.

Clyamon. Then, Sir, do you decline standing yourself?

Avario. Yes, Clyamon. I grow old, and am weary of the fatigue of coming up to London once every year. I find it very expensive, as well as troublesome; for though I board while I am here at a pretty cheap rate, with one that was formerly my servant, yet I know not how it is, money runs strangely away in this town. Besides, I do not think I have been well used: I have had the honour of representing the county of ***** in three successive parliaments, and have got nothing by it, but the honour; and though I have constantly voted on the side of the court, and whenever any debate of consequence was to come upon the carpet, have always previously attended the levee of the minister, to know his will and pleasure; all the recompence I have had, has been sometimes a shake of the hand, a gracious nod, a smile, and 'How does my good friend Avario?'

Clyamon. You amaze me, Sir! I never imagined a gentleman had any other interest in his election than the pleasure of having an opportunity to serve his country.

Avario. Serve his country!—a fiddle on the country! It would be well worth a gentleman's while, indeed, to cajole, treat, and bribe, every little dirty fellow that has a vote to give; to spend so much time and money; and, it may be, drink himself half dead into the bargain, at his election; if it were not for the sake of serving himself, instead of the rabble who make choice of him for their representative. No, no, boy; if we had not honour, favour, and preferment, in view, our electors would be obliged to court us to accept their votes, not we to solicit them.

Clyamon. But, Sir, supposing this to be the case, how do you think it possible I should acquire any of those advantages which you say you have failed in the pursuit of yourself?

Avario. I'll tell you, Clyamon. I could only give my bare vote for or

against any question; I never had the gift of either speaking or writing: now I am pretty sure you can do both; and a pathetick speech, or a strong pamphlet, are prevailing arguments with the ministry; a man that can do these may have any thing, may make his own price. So, Cly, it will be your own fault, if in a sessions or two you are not above receiving any assistance from me.

Clyamon. Sir, I shall be always ready to exert the little talents I am master of to promote whatever I think is for the good of the commonwealth.

Avario. Tut! what have you to do with the commonwealth? You are not to set up for a judge of what is for it's good, or what is not so; your business is to please the minister, and to think every thing right he takes upon him to maintain.

Clyamon. But, Sir, how is this consistent with my conscience or my honour?

Avario. Idle, very idle. I do not like these notions, Clyamon; they may tempt you to an opposition. I shall be afraid you are a Jacobite.

Clyamon. Why, Sir, are all men of honour Jacobites?

Avario. No; but this romantick, unprofitable honour you talk of, is either Jacobitism, or something as bad—enthusiasm and bigotry. Is not the court the source of true honour? Do not all honours, dignities, and promotions, flow from thence? Therefore I say, whoever is against the court will never rise to honour, or any thing else that is valuable.

Clyamon. Sir, you may be perfectly assured, that I shall always do my best in support of every measure which tends to the real honour of his majesty, and the good of my country; and never oppose any which do not oppose the constitution.

Avario. But you must not examine too scrupulously into these things. You are to suppose that those who are entrusted with the management of publick affairs are better acquainted with the constitution than you can pretend to be; and must therefore take it for granted, that whatever they say or do is right.

Clyamon. But, Sir, does not this implicit faith in the judgment of others, and giving up my own entirely, favour somewhat of a slavish submission?

P

Avario.

Avario. No, it is only good policy, and looked upon as such by all who know the world. Indeed, if after your voting, speaking, and writing, they should take no notice of you, it would behove you to pluck up a spirit, and extort that respect to your resentment, which they were not grateful enough to pay to your complaisance. I shall then give you leave to oppose them in every thing, whether it be wrong or whether it be right.

Clyamon. But would not this changing sides, Sir, make me become contemptible to both parties?

Avario. Not at all; it is a thing too commonly practised to be wondered at, and has often had a very good effect, when nothing else would do. Publico, for example. It was a good while, indeed, before they bid up to his price; but they found it necessary at last, and he now enjoys the fruits of his labour.

Clyamon. Yes, Sir, I have heard of many others who have been bought off the same way; but whatever has been done in former administrations, I hope the present will attempt nothing that ought to be opposed.

Avario. No, no, you are not to suppose they will; unless, as I just now observed, they force you to it by neglecting to recompense your services.

Clyamon. According to this, Sir, it will be very difficult, if not altogether impossible, for the people to distinguish between those who would defend, and those who would betray and sacrifice, the liberties of their constituents.

Avario. If the people are betrayed and sacrificed, as you call it, they can blame nobody but themselves. Why do they take money for their votes? Why do they, like Esau, sell their birthrights for a mess of pottage? When a gentleman buys a county, a borough, or a corporation, he has doubtless a right to make the most of it he can.

Clyamon. This, Sir, is punishing corruption with corruption.

Avario. Aye; is it not just it should be so? Look ye, Clyamon, you are a novice in these affairs as yet, but a little time will make them familiar to you. I do not doubt but I shall hear of your being closeted by the great man; and when once you are closeted, your business is done; you will have no farther occasion for my instructions or assistance

either. But I shall say no more at present on this head: you must think of preparing yourself to set out on your journey to *****, in a day or two.

Clyamon. What, Sir, before you go?

Avario. Yes, yes. We shall not be dissolved so soon as we expected. I do not believe I shall be able to get down these six weeks or two months. There have been some odd turns of late: but no matter; they are secrets, and must be kept so. But it is highly necessary you should begin to make your interest: you are already known to the greatest part of the gentry, and I am pretty sure they will be all for you to a man. You must cultivate an acquaintance with the freeholders, ride about among them, invite some of the most leading men home, treat them handsomely, and make little presents to their wives and daughters, of snuff-boxes, rings, necklaces, and such toys, to please their fancies. I will get a friend of mine to purchase a cargo of them for you to take down, and will write to my steward to furnish you with what money you shall have occasion for.

Clyamon. Do they know, Sir, that you intend to decline standing any more?

Avario. Not yet; but I shall write to night to inform them of it, and to urge all my friends in your behalf. I hear your cousin Hawkmore has taken it into his head to offer himself as a candidate; and though he is not beloved, on account of the bustle he made about turnpikes, yet the large estate he is now in possession of by the death of Sir Arthur, may give him an influence over some people. So there is no time to be lost: I would have you leave London on Monday next. I have given orders that all your creditors shall be paid their full demands this day, and I think you can have no other business of consequence to detain you here.

Clyamon. None at all, Sir.

Avario. Well then, what friends you have to take leave of, you may see this afternoon; and come and dine with me to-morrow. It is Sunday, and you know is a leisure day, and I shall be at home. Though I am a boarder, I believe you will be welcome; or it may be I shall add a dish to the table; therefore do not fail to come.

Clyamon. You may depend, Sir, that

that this command is too agreeable to me not to be punctually obeyed.

The old gentleman then said no more; but, after giving his son a gracious nod, went out of the room, with a countenance which denoted the most perfect satisfaction of mind. Clyamon waited on him down stairs; and I intended to follow, as soon as his return should give me an opportunity of going down; but was retarded by Mr. Careless, who came in immediately after Avario was out of the house. This gentleman, who it seems has a sincere friendship for Clyamon, had been extremely impatient, and indeed more anxious than could have been expected from a person of his gay, thoughtless disposition, to know the event of the letter he had received from his father, had been come to the house some time, and waited in the parlour till the departure of Avario made it proper for him to appear. Almost the first salutation he gave to Clyamon contained an entreaty for the satisfaction of his curiosity in this point, which the other very readily complied with, in general terms; but had too much discretion to expose his father's mercenary views; or, by relating the design he had of making him a member of parliament, reveal the motives he had for doing so, or the instructions he had given him for his behaviour after he should be elected.

Mr. Careless, after having congratulated his friend on his being re-established in the good graces of his father, and the honour that was about to recede to him, said a great many pleasant and spirited things to him on the occasion of his being likely to become a member of that august and respectable assembly. But the particulars of this discourse, entertaining as it was, I am entirely unable to repeat, my Tablets being already crowded with the preceding dialogue; and all I can remember is, that the two gentlemen, after chatting away an hour, agreed to dine together that day, and to that end adjourned to a tavern in the neighbourhood, leaving me at liberty to retire to my own apartment. I was extremely pleased with finding, by what I had seen that day of Clyamon, that I had not been deceived in the high-raised expectations I had entertained of his good sense and probity; and also with perceiving that Avario, in spite of his sordid and avaricious disposition, could

not help allowing the merits of a son, whose sentiments and principles were, in almost every thing, so directly opposite to his own.

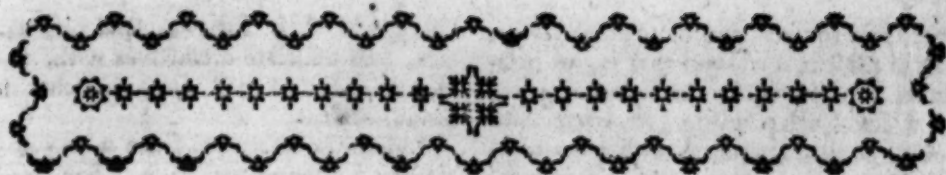
The evening of the next day this worthy young gentleman called upon me, as he returned from having passed the former part of it with his father. He was much less reserved with me than he had been with Mr. Careless, which convinced me he knew how to refrain unbosoming himself to those whose solidity he had cause to doubt, and took a pleasure in being entirely open to those on whom he could depend that his confidence would not be abused either by wantonness or neglect. He repeated to me the rules prescribed to him by his father for the regulation of his conduct in parliament, and expressed the little obligation he thought himself under to him on that score, in terms the most strong and pathetick. These are some of his words—'The love of my country,' said he, 'I look upon as the first and greatest moral duty of mankind; and I think I may venture to assure myself, that I shall never be tempted to renounce it on the prospect of any advantage offered, in what shape so ever.'

I then told him, that I believed the bulk of the people owed the grievances they complained of, greatly to the luxury of their representatives; who, having impaired their estates in the modish excesses of the times, found themselves under a necessity of entering into measures which otherwise they would never have complied with. 'Perhaps, too,' added I, 'to gratify the ambition of a beloved wife, or prevent the clamour of a turbulent one, may be one reason to which the infringement of public liberty may be ascribed.' Clyamon listened with great attention to what I said; and joining in my opinion, replied, that his own observation of some late instances confirmed the truth of this argument. 'The first of these excitements,' continued he, 'I have already experienced the danger of through my inadvertency, and shall be wary to avoid the snare in which I have been once entangled; and, as for the other, if ever I marry, shall endeavour to get a wife as near as possible to the description given by the poet of his mistress—

- * ————— A maid
 * Who knows not courts, yet courts does far
 ' outline
 * In every starry beauty of the mind;
 * One who, array'd in native loveliness,
 * And sweet simplicity, despises art;
 * And has a soul too great to stoop to
 ' pride,
 * With the mean ways by which it aims at
 ' grandeur.'

With these discourses we passed the
 time he staid. I have not seen him since,
 but heard of his safe arrival at *****.
 Whether he will be elected for that
 county, cannot be determined at the time
 of my writing this; so can only say,
 that if he is, I doubt not but his cha-
 racter will appear to much more advan-
 tage, than in the faint sketch I have
 here been able to give of it.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



THE
INVISIBLE SPY.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

BOOK V.

CHAP. I.

THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION TO THIS VOLUME CONSISTS ONLY OF AN APOLOGY FOR MAKING NO INTRODUCTION AT ALL, AND HIS REASONS FOR THAT OMISSION.



SINCE my setting about this work, I have seen several late treatises that are half taken up with introductory prefaces to the publick. On a serious examination to what end those long discourses were penned, they seemed to me to have been occasioned either by one or the other of the following motives: first, that an author having contracted with his bookseller for a certain number of sheets, without having well considered whether his head be stored with subject matter to make good his engagement, finds himself under a necessity of filling up the vacant pages by saying something by way of an introduction, preface, or advertisement to the reader; or, secondly, that fearing the eyes of the publick will not be sufficiently open to the merit of his performance, or, perhaps, not have the curiosity even to look into it at all, he thinks proper to bespeak their favour by a pompous pre-

lude, and sounds his own praises, like a trumpet at the door of a puppet-show.

Now I am too great a lover of liberty ever to bind myself by any such slavish agreement. The first of these incentives is quite out of the question, and cannot possibly have any weight with me; and as to the second, as a more perfect knowledge of myself than I perceive some others have will not permit me to be over vain in any thing I do, so the indolence of my nature will not permit me to be over anxious for the success. Besides, not having the temptation of the motives aforesaid, I have more adventures to relate than can be easily crowded into this volume; therefore have neither time nor paper to spare for an address, which would afford so little satisfaction to myself in the writing, and perhaps less to my reader in the perusing.

CHAP. II.

CONTAINS SUCH MATTER AS, IT IS HIGHLY PROBABLE, WILL BE THE LEAST PLEASING TO THOSE FOR WHOSE SERVICE IT IS MOST INTENDED:

THERE is, according to the wise man's phrase, a folly under the sun, which, in my opinion, has as little to

to be said for it as any of the many other of the present age; and that is, an insatiable inquisitiveness into future events; as if the foreknowledge of what is to come, would enable us either to alleviate or avert the decrees of Providence: yet are all ages, all degrees, of both sexes, tainted more or less with this epidemick frenzy. It cannot but afford the most astonishing, as well as melancholy reflections, in a thinking mind, to observe how many impostors, in and about this great town, are maintained by pretending to the art of divination, while the industrious followers of lawful occupations perish for want of due encouragement.

As I was one day on my Invisible Progressions, I accompanied a mingled crowd of people into a house situated in one of the most obscure parts of the city. At first I imagined that this was some private chapel, where persons resorted to pay their adorations to the Deity in a manner not authorized by the government; but was soon convinced of my mistake, when, instead of a pulpit and desk, I found the room we came into furnished only with globes and telescopes, and other implements of a soothsayer and astrologer. I had not patience to hear what idle predictions this oracle would spout forth, especially as I had no acquaintance with any of those who I saw came to consult him; so took my leave of the deceiver and the deceived, full of indignation against the one, and a pity, mingled with contempt, for the other: for what can be said in defence of the understanding of those people who waste their time and money in consulting those abject dealers in futurity! creatures who would make you believe they can read the most hidden decrees of fate in the grounds of coffee, tea, and chocolate! I had often heard much talk of these conjurors, but not till I was convinced by the testimony of my own senses, could ever be brought to believe, that persons endowed with a liberal education could descend so far as to listen to their inconsistent prate, much less give credit to what they uttered; but so strong is the desire of looking into the seeds of time, especially among the fair sex, that sometimes the most proud, as well as the most nice and delicate, will throw aside all consideration of what they are, or would be thought, and, for the sake of

being told their fortune, send for, caress, and associate themselves with, the very lowest and most dirty wretches in human nature.

Lysetta is descended from a very ancient and honourable house. She lived till considerably turned on the wrong side of thirty without discovering the least inclination for marriage, much less gave any room for the most censorious ever to suspect she encouraged any private gallantries; and the whole tenor of her conduct was such, as no one could imagine her capable of harbouring any notions beneath the dignity of her birth and character. A long acquaintance gave me the privilege of visiting her pretty frequently, and never was denied access. I was one day at her house when she had no other company than a young lady with whom she was extremely intimate. While we were drinking tea, her woman came running into the room, and with a significant tone of voice, said—'Madam, the woman you know of is below.'—'Tis very well,' replied Lysetta; 'shew her into my chamber, and bid her stay a little.' Then turning to her friend, they smiled on each other; nodded, winked, and seemed big with some secret between themselves.

I found, by all this, that my presence might very well be spared at this time; so turned down my cup, and took my leave. As I was going down stairs, I heard Lysetta order herself to be denied to whoever should come that evening; which convincing me of what I before had reason to imagine, that there was something more than ordinary in hand, I resolved, if possible, to fathom the mystery. Accordingly I went home, popped on my Invisible Belt, put my Tablets in my pocket, and returned with all speed. A lazy footman, lolling against a post, with the door wide open behind him, gave me an easy entrance into the house. I very well knew the situation of Lysetta's chamber, and went directly thither; but, to my great mortification, found the ladies had bolted themselves in; and all I could distinguish of what was doing, for some time, was only the hoarse bawls of a loud laugh from Lysetta, and the squeaking treble of a shrill tee-hee from the other.

I stood sentinel, however, at the top of the stair-case, and at last was happily relieved. Lysetta opened the door, and called





called to her woman to bring clean cups. Having now gained admittance, I soon perceived what they were about. A coffee-pot upon the table; the dregs of the liquor it had contained poured into a basin; several cups, with more figures on the inside than the outside, and the yet recent circles they had left on being whelmed down on a damask napkin spread on one corner of the table; presently informed me they were employed in the art and mystery of conjuration. The priestess of these farcical rites was a mean-habited, ill-looking woman; and, though not old, had her nose saddled with a pair of spectacles almost as big as the tops of the cups she pretended to inspect: she was placed between the two ladies, who seemed to treat her with the greatest marks of freedom and civility.

Lysetta, I found, had been so complaisant to her friend as to let her be first served: but it was now her own turn; and fresh cups being brought, and the coffee-oracle having judiciously poured the quantity of a tea-spoonful into each, the lady took it into her hand, threw out the liquor, whelmed it on the cloth, and turned it round three times. All being concluded, the prophetess took up the first with the most solemn air, looked stedfastly into it, then on Lysetta; and, after having repeated this several times, at last delivered her predictions in these terms—

Fortune-teller. I see a ring, Madam; your ladyship will be married.

Lysetta. 'Tis rather a mourning-ring; some of my kindred or friends, perhaps, may die.

Fortune-teller. I can say nothing to that, Madam, as yet: but I am positive here is a wedding-ring, a heart just by it; and a little farther there is a great house, with a high wall, and a pair of gates. Your ladyship will have some gentleman that has a fine seat in the country—it looks almost like a castle.

Lysetta. I know nothing of it. But what else do you see?

Fortune-teller. Here is a man, Madam, that seems to bring you money. Here are papers, too; I do not know but they may be bills.

Lysetta. Very likely; for I expect my banker here either to-day or tomorrow.

Fortune-teller. Then here is a bun-

dle of something brought to your ladyship's house.

Lysetta. Oh, that is a new sack I have making. But is there nothing more?

Fortune-teller. Not in this cup, Madam: but I will look into the next.

Lysetta. Do; for you have told me nothing of any consequence.

Fortune-teller. There is a great deal here, Madam, I can perceive already. Here is a gentleman sitting in an easy chair, leaning his elbow upon the table, and seems to be in a deep study.

Lysetta. Pish! what's this to me?

Fortune-teller. Yes, Madam, it is a great deal to you; for here is your ladyship, and the very same gentleman on his knees before you. You turn your head away, and look a little scornful; but he has you by the hand. Bless me! here you are both together again; he is talking very earnestly to you. I never saw any thing so plain; your ladyship may see it yourself.

In speaking these last words, she held the cup to Lysetta, and with a pin pointed out the eyes, the nose, and mouth, of the pretended figure; but Lysetta pushed it from her, and said—

Lysetta. I could never see any thing in a cup in my life. But what sort of a man is he?

Fortune-teller. Pretty tall, Madam; well shaped; very genteel; has a fair complexion, and somewhat of a languishment in his eyes.

Lysetta. I cannot recollect that I know any man who answers this description.

Fortune-teller. I scarce think you do, Madam, at present; but your ladyship may take my word for it, that you will see and be courted by such a one; for here is a figure of three over his head: it must be either in three days, or three weeks, at farthest. Let me consider—aye, the moon was at the full yesterday—this event must happen before she enters into her next quarter. But the next cup, it may be, will shew it more clearly.

With this she took up the third cup; and had no sooner looked into it, than she set it down again, clapped her hands together, and cried out—

Fortune-teller. Bless me! now I am positive your ladyship will very soon be married! Here is an altar, a book upon it,

it, and a parson; all as exact as if they were drawn by a pencil.

She then took up the cup again; and perceiving Lysetta began to look a little more serious than she had done, went on in this manner—

Fortune-teller. Well, this is wonderful, indeed! Of all the cups I ever turned in my life, I never saw any thing like this! Here is your ladyship hand in hand with that said gentleman who I told you was in the other. I would now swear that your ladyship will be a wife before any one imagines you have any thoughts that way.

Lysetta. I have a very good opinion of your skill, yet am certain you are mistaken in this prediction; for, to tell you the truth, I am resolved never to marry.

Fortune-teller. Your ladyship may resolve what you please; but if the stars resolve the contrary, all your resolutions will come to nothing. Madam, there is no resisting fate: this gentleman is ordained to be your husband; and, how much soever you may set yourself against it, the decrees of destiny are inevitable, and you must submit.

Lysetta. Oh, Heavens! whether I will or not!

Fortune-teller. Undoubtedly, Madam. There is no withstanding the superior powers; and those things which we think the farthest removed from us, are frequently the most near at hand; so that design what you will, resolve what you will, it is all in vain; your ladyship is ordained to be a wife, and the gentleman I see in these cups must be your husband.

Lysetta. Well, if such a thing should come to pass, shall I be happy?

Fortune-teller. There is nothing in the cup, Madam, that shews the contrary.

The cups having been all examined, the prophetess, after receiving a handsome gratuity for her trouble, took her leave, and left Lysetta and her fair companion to reason between themselves on the wonders of her art. But my Chrysaline Remembrancer being now quite full, it is not in my power to relate the particulars of their discourse; and can only say, that they both seemed to give an implicit credit to every thing she had pretended to reveal.

CHAP. III.

PRESENTS THE READER WITH A VERY FOOLISH ADVENTURE OF LYSETTA'S, TO WHICH ALL THAT WAS CONTAINED IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER WAS ONLY A PRELUDE.

HAVING discovered this folly in Lysetta, which before I could never have imagined, I began now to be censorious enough to suspect she might also be guilty of others, and therefore took it into my head to make her some Invisible Visits, at those hours in which it was likely her behaviour was most unguarded. In order to satisfy my curiosity, I went one morning, and found her busy in looking over some new pamphlets, just sent her by her bookseller. As I always thought the most certain way to form a true judgment of a woman's mind was in knowing what sort of reading she most delighted in, I was glad to perceive that this lady made choice of only such books as shewed her neither a wanton nor a coquette, and returned all those which, by their titles, discovered the least tendency to prophaneness or obscenity. After this, she began to open the leaves of one of them; but before she had gone through half the leaves it contained, was interrupted by her footman, who brought her a letter, and said the person waited for an answer. I slipped behind her chair while she broke the seal, and the contents were as follow—

' TO THE HONOURABLE LYSETTA.

' MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LADYSHIP,

' MADAM,

' I Hope your goodness will pardon the liberty a stranger takes in writing to you; but as I am not so fortunate to be acquainted with any person who can introduce me to your ladyship, I am obliged to become my own solicitor, and most humbly request you will allow me the privilege of waiting on you this afternoon, if no previous engagement intervenes between me and my desires, having something to communicate of the utmost

most moment to the peace of him who has the honour to be, with the most profound respect, your ladyship's sincerely devoted servant,

‘ORSAMES.’

Lyssetta seemed a good deal confounded on reading this little epistle; and after pausing a while, argued with herself in this manner—‘Good God! if this should be the man the fortune-teller told me of! she said I should hear or see something of him within three days, and this is but the second since the prediction. If I was sure he was the person she mentioned, I think I ought not to give him leave to visit me, at least not on his first requesting it; yet I should be glad, methinks, to see if he any way answers the description she gave of him: besides, if I should refuse him, some accident or another would bring us together; for it is certain, there is no such thing as disappointing fate. Why, therefore, should I keep myself in suspense? No, I will see him, and hear what he has to say. It may be he may come upon some other business than what I imagine, and then it would be vastly silly in me to avoid him. Whoever he is, or whatever his designs are, it can be of no prejudice to see him once. He cannot run away with me, cannot have me against my will.’

She then called her servant, and bid him say that she should be at home. The fellow ran down, but had scarce time to deliver the message he was charged with, before she repented of it, as may be seen by this exclamation: ‘Lord! what have I done! if he is really the person I take him to be, he must think me strangely forward in so easily granting him admittance.’

While she was speaking this, she ran to the stair-case with an intent to retract what she had said; but a second thought withholding her, she turned back into the room, and cried out—‘What a fool I am! he does not know that I have consulted a fortune-teller, nor that I have any reason to guess at the business that brings him hither. Why, therefore, should I shun him? What shame can my seeing him reflect upon me? It will be time enough to forbid his visits when he has declared himself my lover.’

How long she would have continued

in that mind is uncertain. Two ladies came in that instant to desire her company with them to the Park, being a fine morning; to which she consenting, I left them, and went home, but with a full resolution to return in the afternoon, and see what event the expected interview would produce. Accordingly I put on my Belt of Invisibility, and went to the house of Lyssetta. I saw a chair waiting, but the door was shut, and I was obliged to stay in the street a considerable time, before it was opened for any person, either to go in or out. I got entrance at last, and passed directly to the dining-room, where I found the person I was desirous of beholding. On my looking earnestly on him, I saw he had so much the resemblance of the picture drawn for him by the fortune-teller, that I presently perceived she must be better acquainted with his features than the cups could make her, and that in reality she was a marriage-broker, under the disguise of a coffee-grounds calculator. He had placed himself very close to Lyssetta on a settee, and must have been making a declaration of love to her by the answer she gave just as I came into the room.

Lyssetta. Sir, it does not become me to hearken to any professions of this nature, from a person, to whose family, fortune, and character, I am so entire a stranger.

Orsames. It will be easy for me, Madam, to give you full satisfaction in all these particulars; but till I can do so, I beg you will permit me, at least, to convince you of my passion.

Lyssetta. Though, Sir, there is no room to doubt, either by your appearance or behaviour, that you are a gentleman and a man of honour, yet I should be glad, methinks, to know some one person with whom you are acquainted.

Orsames. Unfortunately for me, Madam, there is not a soul in this town who can give any account of me. This, perhaps, you will think odd; but permit me to give a short sketch of my history, and you will cease to wonder at it.

Lyssetta. Then, pray Sir, oblige me so far.

Orsames. It is no boast in me, Madam, to assure your ladyship, that my family is among the number of the most ancient in England, having been settled here long before the Conquest, and many

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of them been bishops, judges, and privy-counsellors; but my father, taking some disgust at the measures in a late reign, resolved to quit his native country for ever; and to that end sold the seat of his ancestors, with a very considerable estate in Somersetshire, and carried the purchase-money, together with his whole family, to Philadelphia, where he had then a brother, reputed the most wealthy merchant in that place. It was there, Madam, I was born, and am the only surviving issue of my parents, and consequently the sole heir of their possessions, as also of my uncle's, he dying without leaving any child behind him. I fear I tire you, Madam.

Lysetta. No, Sir, I beg you will go on.

Orsames. From my very infancy there was somewhat in my nature which could not relish the manners of these Americans, though born among them. I had read a great deal, and heard much concerning England, and had always a passionate desire to come to it; but my father, even after my arriving at maturity, would never listen to any intreaties on that score. After his death, my uncle was no less averse to my removal; but on his demise, finding myself freed from all dependency, and entirely master of my own actions, I left all my effects to be disposed of by a person whose integrity I am well assured of, and taking with me only a thousand guineas, just for present use, embarked in the first ship that sailed for England, where I happily arrived about six weeks since.

Lysetta. But would it not have been better, Sir, that you had staid at Philadelphia till your affairs had been settled?

Orsames. Not at all, Madam; I have friends there that will manage for me as well as if I were there in person. Besides, an irresistible impulse hurried me to England. I could not then account for my impatience, but am now convinced it was my guardian angel called me to behold in reality that lovely face I have so often seen in dreams.

Lysetta. What! dream of me!

Orsames. Yes, Madam, though so many leagues distant, my spirit has been often with you, conversed with you, and avowed that flame my mortal part now feels.

Lysetta. Is it possible!

Orsames. True, by Heaven!

Lysetta. And are you certain I am the same you saw in your sleep?

Orsames. I could not be deceived; the first moment my eyes were blest with your presence at the Chapel Royal, I forgot the solemnity of the place, and the pious business that had brought me thither.

Lysetta. 'Tis very wonderful; but 'tis time enough to talk of these things. As you have related to me the former part of your life, I should like to know in what manner you intend to regulate the future.

Orsames. That must be submitted to my charming directress; all my affairs, as well as my heart, must henceforth be at your disposal. I had thoughts, indeed, of purchasing a small estate, of about fifteen hundred or two thousand pounds a year; but whether I should put the remainder of my fortune into the publick funds, or lay it out on an employment at court, I had not yet determined.

Lysetta. Oh, by all means buy a place; the court is the only thing upon earth.

Orsames. Next to your company I believe it is; and since you approve the thought, shall infallibly pursue it.

Lysetta. Whoever you marry, Sir, will doubtless be of my opinion.

Orsames. Ah! do not wrong my faithful heart so much as to imagine it capable of being charmed by any other. No, if all my love, my services, my prayers, should fail to move the adorable Lysetta, I vow an eternal celibacy.

Lysetta. You men always talk thus when you would impose on the credulity of our sex; but, Sir, it is time alone that is the true touch-stone of sincerity.

Orsames. Madam, it is, and to that I shall trust the decision of my fate; therefore, I once more implore your permission to repeat my vows, and pay you the tribute which beauty like yours demands from love like mine.

Lysetta. I will not hear so much of love; but, as you are a stranger in town, and as yet have no acquaintance, I cannot be so ungentle to refuse you the privilege of visiting me sometimes.

At these words, he threw himself upon his knees; and, catching hold of both her hands, pressed first the one and then the other to his lips, with the greatest appearance of transport; all which she suffered,

suffered, nor discovered the least reluctance. I know not how long he might have continued in this mute courtship, if the sound of somebody at the door had not obliged him suddenly to rise. It was Lyetta's servant, who immediately entered, and presented her with two letters, which had been just left her by the post. She looked on the superscriptions, then threw them carelessly on the table, without shewing any impatience to examine the contents; but her lover, either through politeness, or because he had acted enough of his part for the first time, thought proper to take his leave, saying, he would do himself the honour to wait on her the next day.

He was no sooner gone, than she began to give a loose to those agitations his presence and discourse had occasioned, and which she had not without great difficulty restrained from being visible. It was in these terms she expressed herself, which, incoherent as they are, I shall deliver them to my readers, just as I found them the next morning engraved on my Tablets. 'Well, this is the oddest accident; sure there was never any thing so astonishing! Let people say what they will, there is a great deal in the throwing of a cup; that woman is certainly the devil; how exactly she described this gentleman! I have said I would never marry, but if the stars have ordained it otherwise, it is in vain to resist; and if his fortune be such as he pretends it is, I can see no cause for any one to blame me.'

Here she stopped, and fell into a little reverie; but soon coming out of it, thus renewed her ejaculations: 'There is nothing in the person nor address of this new lover but what is perfectly agreeable; and I believe I shall like him well enough on a little more acquaintance with him: he seems vastly charmed with me; but one ought not to build on what the men say on these occasions. There is something strangely particular, indeed, in his dreaming of me without ever having seen me: in fine, the more I consider, the more I find the hand of fate is in this business, and I must submit.'

After this, she seemed somewhat more composed, and began to read the letters she had received. I also looked over them at the same time; but found they were only from relations, of family affairs of no moment to the publick, or to

the narrative I am reciting. When I came home, had thrown myself into an easy-chair, and began to ruminate on the extraordinary scene I had been witness of, I knew not whether the base design, which I now plainly perceived had been concerted between the fortune-teller and Orfames, or the weakness and infatuation of Lysetta in giving credit to their romantick lyes, had the most right to engross my amazement. But when I reflected more deeply on the various impositions I daily saw practised, my wonder ceased, on account either of the fortune-teller or the fortune-hunter, and fixed itself entirely on the simplicity of Lysetta. It now seemed not strange to me, that the most illiterate and abject wretches should be endowed with a natural store of cunning, which, backed by impudence, renders them capable of forming contrivances to deceive; else how do we often see pick-pockets and house-breakers circumvent the watchfulness of the most cautious? But then, those sort of pilferers rob us when our heads are turned another way, or when we are sleeping in our beds; but in listening to fortune-tellers, we are defrauded with our eyes open, and give, as it were, our own consent to the worst kind of theft, that of stealing away our understanding.

People guilty of this egregious folly, when detected in it, pretend they consult those ridiculous oracles for no other end than merely to divert themselves, without believing, or even remembering one syllable of the predictions delivered to them. This may, perhaps, at first be true; but there are too many instances which prove, that custom, by degrees, turns into earnest what might once be meant as a jest. The reason is this: those subtle creatures frequently find means, either by emissaries, or by insinuating themselves among servants, to get into the secrets of families, and one real fact serving to make all they say believed, gives them the power to work the person who depends upon them almost to any point they aim at. The most pernicious designs have been carried on this way. Husbands have been set against their wives, and wives against their husbands; parents have been made to disregard their children, and children to forget all obedience to their parents; the best matches have been broke off, and the most disproportionate

tionable ones made : in fine, there is no kind of mischief but what has happened when a fortune-teller has been bribed by some base person, who has an interest in bringing about such events. Therefore, as there is a strict law in force against these pretended dealers in futurity, I cannot help saying, that I regret it's not being executed with greater punctuality; since the more simple an evil appears, the more dangerous it proves in it's effects.

CHAP. IV.

CONTAINS THE CATASTROPHE OF AN AFFAIR, WHICH THE REPE- TITION OF OUGHT NOT TO GIVE OFFENCE TO ANY ONE, EXCEPT THE PERSON WHOSE RESENTMENT THE AUTHOR WILL NOT LOOK UPON AS A MISFORTUNE.

LYSETTA was so strongly persuaded in her mind, that it was her fate to marry Orfames, that she made not the least attempt to check the growing inclination she had for him, but rather thought it a virtue in her to encourage the most tender sentiments for a person ordained by Heaven to be her husband. I made several visits to her, both in my visible and invisible capacity, and seldom went without finding Orfames there, and every time more free and *degagé* than before. He made so swift a progress in his courtship, that in less than a month he became the major-domo of her family, commanded all the servants, and behaved as if already their master. To add to all this, Lysetta suffered him to conduct her to all publick places, sat in the same box at the playhouse, and always dined and supped with her, whatever company were there: in a word, they were never asunder but in those hours when decency obliged them to be so.

So strange a revolution in the behaviour of Lysetta, made a great noise in the town; all her acquaintance were surprized; all her friends and kindred were much alarmed at it; especially as the person to whom she shewed these extraordinary favours was altogether unknown, nor could they get the least account of him. Those, who either through a long conversation or affinity of blood,

could take the privilege of discoursing with her on this head, did it in a very free manner; but the answers she gave to their interrogatories were far from being satisfactory. When she told them his history as he had related it, they treated it with contempt. Some said that he was an impostor; others, more modest, that they wished he was not so; to both which she returned, that whatever he were, she was certain it was her fate to marry him, and desired they would give themselves no pain on that occasion. As she was naturally of a haughty, obstinate disposition, it is highly probable, that the remonstrances they took the liberty of making to her, rather strengthened than abated her resolution of giving herself to him. I was at her house one day, under cover of my Invisible Belt, when I heard the following conversation between them—

Orfames. Condemn me not, my angel, for being sometimes melancholy even in your presence. Though you have promised to make me one day the happiest of mankind, and I look upon every word of that dear mouth as unfailing as an oracle, yet when I consider the length of time between me and the consummation of my wishes, the impatience of my passion will not permit me to be gay.

Lysetta. You men are always in such a hurry in every thing you do.

Orfames. Ah, Madam, 'tis a dreadful thing to have one's happiness depend on the uncertain winds and waves; it may be yet two months before my effects can arrive from Philadelphia.

Lysetta. And do you call that so long a time?

Orfames. A million of ages in the account of love, and even, according to common calculation, longer than human nature can sustain continual torments; eight-whole weeks, six and fifty anxious days, and as many restless nights; upwards of thirteen hundred hours of tedious expectation; and minutes almost numberless, wasted in pain which might be passed in pleasure, if you would shorten the tremendous date.

Lysetta. What would you have me do?

Orfames. Ah! if you loved, you need not be told, but of yourself generously bring the blessed event nearer to my wishes.

Lysetta. You would not have me marry

marry till your affairs are settled, and things can be done to our mutual satisfaction.

Orfames. I understand you, Madam; the articles of jointure and pin-money, I know, are customary in modish marriages; but the passion you have inspired me with is of too sublime a nature to stoop to such mean forms. I ask not what your fortune is, but will settle the whole of mine upon you; your lovely person is all the treasure I am ambitious of preserving; the rest shall be at your disposal.

Lysetta. That is kind, indeed; but more than I desire or would accept of.

Orfames. Oh! that you had no other fortune than your beauty! then would the sincerity of my love be proved by endowing you with all that Heaven has made me master of. Alas! you know not how ardently, how faithfully I adore you.

Lysetta. Yes, I am vain enough to think I have some share in your affections.

Orfames. Some share! Oh! could you be sensible of the thousandth part of what I feel, pity, if not love, would compel you to ease my throbbing heart of the suspense it labours under, and you would give yourself to my burning, bleeding passion.

Lysetta. I have already said I will be yours, and now again repeat it.

Orfames. But when, my angel!

In speaking these words he threw himself upon his knees before her, burst into a flood of well-dissembled tears, and grasped her *robe de chambre* with agonies which I cannot but say had much the appearance of reality, while in these terms he prosecuted his design—

Orfames. I have till now supported life but in the rapturous hope of being one day blessed in your possession: but even hope, by its uncertainty, becomes at last too weak an aid; and soon, very soon, my adorable Lysetta, will you behold your faithful lover a cold breathless corpse, unless the balm of your kindness recruits the vital lamp, and gives fresh vigour to my depressed and breaking heart.

Lysetta. I cannot bear to hear and see you thus. Rise, Sir; this posture does not become the man whom I intend to make my husband.

Orfames. No, by Heaven, I never will quit your feet without an assurance

of my happiness. Say, then, oh say! when shall be the blissful day that makes you mine!

Lysetta. Since it must be so, even when you please.—No, hold, I had forgot myself.

Orfames. Oh, Heavens, what now?

Lysetta. I promised a clergyman, my near kinsman, that if ever I married, he should perform the ceremony; he is at present out of town, but will return next Sunday, and on the Tuesday following it shall not be my fault if we do not attend him at the altar.

Orfames. Extatick sound! May I depend on the performance of this heavenly promise!

Lysetta. You may, and be entirely easy on that point; and take now my hand, as an earnest of my giving it you in a more solemn manner before a parson: henceforward I shall look upon myself as yours.

Orfames. Angel! goddess! Thus then let me seal the covenant on those charming lips that have pronounced it.

Lysetta. The covenant will not hold good in law without both parties interchangeably sign their assent.

She uttered these words with a most pleasing smile, and at the same time threw her arms about his neck, and returned the passionate salute she had received from him, adding this tender expression—‘My dear, dear Orfames, I do not now blush to confess to you, that from the first moment you declared yourself my lover, my heart corresponded with your vows, and told me what would be the event.’ He affected too much transport, on hearing her speak in this manner, to be able to make any other reply than kisses and embraces, which, as she was far from repelling, or seeming the least offended at, I know not what advantages he might have taken, on finding her thus softened by his artifices, if a sudden interruption had not, happily for her, broke off this dangerous entertainment. A footman came and told her that her aunt, lady Gravelove, was come to visit her; on which she cried out with some peevishness—‘Pish! why did you not say I was from home?’ Then turning fondly to Orfames, said—

Lysetta. Do you chuse to join company with my aunt? or shall I fetch some book to amuse you with till she is gone?

Orfames.

Orfames. No, my dearest love; this lady has always looked upon me with an unpleasing eye, especially of late, therefore will not offend her with my presence; neither are my spirits enough composed, in the excess of joy you have inspired me with, to read any thing with attention; so will take a little walk.

Lysetta. Do so; but I shall expect you back to supper: my aunt seldom stays longer than to drink tea, and I am sure I shall not press her at this time.

No more was said on either side; they embraced and parted; she went into the next room, and he down stairs, in order to go where his business or inclination called him. As I never believed this fellow was what he pretended, I had taken some pains to discover the truth of his circumstances, but without any success, till it now came into my mind to follow him, after he had left Lysetta's house; which I did, resolving not to lose sight of him till he should return to her again.

He went directly to Drury Lane, walked very fast, and never stopped till he came to the entrance of a narrow passage between that place and Wild Street, where he stood still, and looked round him, I suppose, to see if any one was near who might know him; for day was not yet quite shut in: then passed a little farther, looked about him again, and finding the coast, as he thought, clear, none being in the alley but his Invisible Attendant, slipped hastily into a little dirty alehouse, where an old woman met him, and told him his friends were all above; on which he ran up stairs, and pushed open the door of a room, pretty spacious indeed, but had otherwise all the signs of beggary and wretchedness about it. Here we found five or six men tolerably well habited, but had something in their countenances which made me guess their occupation before they discovered it by their conversation; for they were no better than a gang of thieves and sharpers: they were sitting round a table with a great bowl of punch before them, when Orfames rushed in, and, with a gay air, accosted them in these terms—

Orfames. With me joy, my lads, my hearts of steel, with me joy; I have gained my point; all is over, i'faith.

First Man. What, married!

Orfames. No, but as good as married; the wench and her twelve thousand pounds are as sure to me, as if I had the one in my arms, and the other in my pocket. Tuesday is the day, my buff! But I must have more money, by G—d! I have not a single doit left.

Second Man. How! all the fifty pieces gone already!

Orfames. Ay, faith, and well laid out too; I shall return it with interest; you are all to share in the money, and the woman too. But come, how stands stock among you?

Third Man. Cursed low: though we have been all out to-day, we have not collected above thirty pieces, and four gold watches that must be knocked to pieces, and the cases melted down, or the makers names may betray us.

Fourth Man. The road grows worse and worse every day, I think.

Orfames. But did you get nothing from the ladies the fortune-teller told you were to take the air this morning on Barnes Common?

Fifth Man. I should have done; but, as the devil would have it, just as they were going to pull out their purses, three gentlemen, with fire-arms, came galloping towards us, and obliged me to make off without my booty.

Orfames. 'Twas damn'd unlucky!

First Man. One meets with a thousand disappointments; for my part, I am half sick of the business, and so I believe we are all.

Second Man. Ay, faith; for, what with seeing inn-keepers, coachmen, fortune-tellers, and other such necessary informers, we have the least part of the profit to ourselves.

Third Man. Ay, I wish, Orfames, you were once married, that you might set up a gaming-table under the sanction of your lady's name. Gaming is ten times a more profitable, as well as a safer way of thieving.

Orfames. You know it was my bargain, and you may depend upon my honour, that it shall be the first thing I will do.

Fourth Man. It will be a joyful day; for, since taxes have been so high, and trade so low, such numbers of shop-keepers are obliged to take the road, that we old practitioners can scarce get a living by it.

Orfames. Well, well, all this will be over

over in a short time: but you must raise me some cash; I can easily give you an account of the fifty pieces.

Fifth Man. No, no, it needs not; we know you would not sink upon us.

Orfames. I chuse, however, to do it. The first article is five guineas to the fortune-teller, as an earnest of the hundred she is to receive after my marriage with Lysetta. The second, is twenty pounds for a gold snuff-box, which I pretended to have brought from Philadelphia, and presented to her ladyship. The third, is about ten more, spent in three several jaunts I made with her to Richmond, Windsor, and Greenwich. The remainder, you may believe, might well be spent in donations to her servants, board-wages to my own man, paying my lodgings at two guineas a week, chair-hire, and other necessary expences.

First Man. You could do no less.

Second Man. Ay, ay, nothing of all this could have been spared. But what sum do you demand at present?

Orfames. I believe twenty pieces will defray the whole charges of the wedding, which is all I want; afterwards, my boys, I shall have enough for you all.

On this, every one turned out his pockets, and the sum was immediately made up, and laid upon the table; which Orfames put into his purse: and then some discourse ensued among this vicious company, which I chuse to pass over in silence, as it would be no fit entertainment for the chaste ears of my fair readers. Orfames staid with them about two hours, and then took his leave in order to sup with Lysetta, as she had desired he would. I accompanied him not thither, but went home to my own apartment, more full of confusion at the discovery I had made than I am able to express. Though I half despised Lysetta for the follies I had seen her guilty of; yet, when I reflected on her birth, and the character she had maintained in the world, I could not bear the thoughts of her becoming the victim of the base design concerted against her; and her fortune, reputation, and eternal peace of mind, the prey of such a nest of villains.

My whole study was now fully bent to snatch this unfortunate lady from that gulph of perdition she was upon the brink of, and so near plunging into. I was extremely divided in my thoughts what to do upon this occasion. To give her any hints concerning the dangers

to which she exposed herself and reputation, by encouraging the addresses of a man whose character she was so little acquainted with, I knew would be in vain, as she had rejected all the warnings given her on that score, and refused to listen to the admonitions of her best friends and nearest kindred. I had it in my power, indeed, to inform her of much more than any of them could even guess at: but then I could not relate the scene I had been witness of, without discovering, at the same time, the secret of my Invisible Belt; which was by no means proper for me to entrust her with.

To acquaint her by letter with what I knew concerning Orfames, and the villainous conspiracy which had been formed to ruin her, I feared would be to as little purpose; and doubted not but she would look upon an anonymous intimation only as a piece of malice, and treat it with the contempt it might seem to merit. As this, however, was the only method I could take to save her, with any convenience to myself, I resolved to pursue it; and accordingly wrote to her next morning a full account of all I had been witness of between Orfames and his wicked companions. I made this letter be left at her house before the time in which she usually got out of bed, to the end she might have leisure to consider the contents, without being interrupted by any company coming in. As I was desirous of seeing in what manner she would receive this intelligence, I went, under cover of my Belt, and gained entrance just as she had finished the perusal.

Her behaviour was such as I apprehended it would be. She tore the letter, stormed, and cried out—'Was there ever so much impudence! Sure the person who sent this infamous scrawl must have a very mean opinion of my understanding, to think I could give the least credit to such a vile aspersions!—Orfames an impostor! a companion for thieves and vagabonds!—ridiculous!' And then again—'This must certainly be a contrivance of some of my wise kindred to break off the match. I could find in my heart to send for Orfames, and marry him this instant, to shew how much I despise their little malice. But 'tis no matter; Tuesday will soon arrive, and that will put an end to all.'

I staid

I staid a full hour, in the supposition that Orfames would make her a morning visit; but finding, by some discourse she had with her maid, that she did not expect him, and was making herself ready to go among the shops for things she wanted, I quitted her apartment, much disconcerted at the ill success of what I had done. However, as I had little else to employ my time that day, I went again in the afternoon. Orfames was now there, and two ladies of Lysetta's particular acquaintance. Whether she had mentioned any thing to him of the letter, I cannot be certain; but am apt to think she had not; for he appeared with an alertness which, by all I could discover, had nothing of constraint in it. Cards were called for; and they were just going to sit down to whist, when word was brought to Lysetta, that her cousin, Captain Platoon, was just arrived from Carlisle, and come to wait upon her; on which she ordered him to be shewed up immediately. Orfames, who I perceived had turned pale as ashes on hearing this gentleman's name, now rose hastily from his chair, and said to Lysetta—'I have just thought of some business. I had to dispatch—your ladyship must excuse me—the affair that calls me is of consequence—I cannot stay.'

She was going to make some reply, but the captain came that instant into the room. While he was paying his compliments to his cousin and the other ladies, Orfames had taken up his hat, and was endeavouring to slip out unperceived; but the quick-sightedness of Lysetta prevented him: she ran to him, and catching hold of his sleeve, said—'You shall not go; at least till I have presented you to my cousin.' Then turning to the captain, said—'This is a gentleman, cousin, whose acquaintance, I believe, you will hereafter think yourself happy in.'

On this the captain advanced, with great politeness, to embrace the person his kinswoman presented to him; but had no sooner fixed his eyes upon his face, than he started back with the utmost astonishment, and cried out to Lysetta—'What is the meaning of this, Madam? Who would you introduce to me?' She was opening her mouth to make some answer; but Orfames, who was drawing as fast as he could towards the door, hindered her from speaking, by saying, with a hesitating voice—

'Madam, the gentleman does not seem to desire any new acquaintance. I will wait on your ladyship another time.' In speaking this, he got to the top of the stair-case; and, it is likely, would have made but one step to the bottom, if the captain had not prevented him, by running to him, and catching fast hold of him by the collar, dragged him back, saying, at the same time—'No, rascal! you must not think to leave this place till you have confessed what devil gave you the impudence to introduce yourself into such company, and on what villainous design you are thus disguised in the habit of a gentleman.' Then addressing himself to Lysetta, who stood as motionless as if transfixed with thunder, went on thus—'Madam, by what means soever this villain has imposed on you, I do assure you, upon my honour, that two months ago he was a private man in Captain Cutcomb's company, and drummed out of the regiment for pig-stealing, and other misdemeanors; for some of which, indeed, he ought to have been hanged.'

On these words Lysetta screamed out—'Oh, Heavens!' and fell into a swoon. The captain seeing this, quitted his prisoner, to run with the two ladies to her assistance; and Orfames took this opportunity of making his escape. Proper means being applied, she soon recovered; and the swelling passions which had occasioned this disorder, vented themselves in tears. The captain appeared a little impatient to know how she became acquainted with such a wretch as Orfames; but she told him she was not then in a condition to inform him of the particulars; said she was very ill, and must lie down, and desired to see him another time: on which he took his leave, as did the two ladies; who knowing Orfames had professed himself her lover, and the encouragement she had given him, I could perceive smiled within themselves at the discovery. Thus was Lysetta preserved from ruin; and had no other punishment for her folly, than being laughed at by those who were privy to the affair. As for Orfames, I have since met him about town, in a very shabby and tattered condition. The gang of villains, his associates, I believe, are dispersed; and one of them has made his exit at Tyburn.

CHAP. V.

TREATS ON VARIOUS MATTERS, SOME OF WHICH, THE AUTHOR DARES VENTURE TO ASSURE THE PUBLICK WILL HEREAFTER BE FOUND NOT ONLY MORE ENTERTAINING, BUT ALSO OF MORE CONSEQUENCE; THAN AT PRESENT THEY APPEAR TO BE.

I Had been told that Lady Playfield's rout was an assemblage of the most brilliant and polite persons of both sexes; and though I never had any great opinion of this sort of meetings, yet I was tempted to go thither, in order to be myself a witness how far the description that had been given me was consonant to truth. As I am an entire stranger to her ladyship, and did not care for the formality of being introduced by any one who went there, I chose to make this visit in my Invisible capacity. The great number of wax tapers, the sparkle of the ladies' jewels, and the extraordinary beauty of some among them, was dazzling to my eyes at first entrance: but I soon found that I had the same fault to find with this, as I had done in all other mixed company I ever saw; a kind of hurry and confusion, which destroys that solid conversation that is so agreeable when only a few select friends are met together. It was near nine o'clock when I went thither, yet there were several who came in after me. Lady Playfield received all of them with her accustomed politeness; but, for a great while, there was nothing in the salutations, on either side, which engrossed my attention so far, as to make me spread my Tablets to retain it.

I was, indeed, quite indolent to every thing that was said, till the entrance of Lady Allmode gave a little spur to my curiosity. I had heard much talk of this lady, not only for her being extravagantly fond of every new fashion, but also for a certain peculiarity in her manner of conversation, which made her admired by people of a low education, and as much laughed at by those of a superior. I had been told that she had an utter aversion to plain English; and to thorough a contempt for what she called the vulgar way of speaking, that when

she talked, even on the most common things, she interlarded all she said with the hardest words she could pick out of the dictionary, and frequently coined new ones of her own, which never were, nor scarce ever will be, found in any vocabulary. Lady Playfield, I perceived, received her with a great deal of respect. I was then at some distance; but, on finding they were entering into conversation, drew more near, to have an opportunity of hearing, and improving myself, by a person of whom so extraordinary a description had been given me. After the first compliments were over, Lady Playfield addressed herself to her in these terms—

Lady Playfield. Though I am always happy when I see your ladyship, yet now I can scarce forbear complaining of your unkindness in coming without Miss Arabella. I hear she has been in town above a week.

Lady Allmode. I could not have been guilty of so enormous a solecism in good breeding, as not to have brought her to pay her duty to your ladyship, if there had been a possibility in nature to have done it.

Lady Playfield. I hope Miss is well, Madam.

Lady Allmode. Perfectly so, Madam, as to her health; but such a sight! such a figure!—a greater metamorphosis than any in Ovid.

Lady Playfield. What does your ladyship mean?

Lady Allmode. Oh, Madam, the remotest corner of the most desert of the three Arabias never produced such a creature; such a Tramontane, as the Italians elegantly phrase it. Well, these people who live a great way from London, are such absurdians, such awkwardities! Would your ladyship believe it? they sent the girl home in a cap that quite covered the drum of her ears.

Lady Playfield. That might be to prevent her catching cold in the coach.

Lady Allmode. Oh, Jupiter! how am I surprized to hear your ladyship talk in this manner!—But this is not all. The girl had several new suits of cloaths, when she left London, made in the gentlest taste: but my country aunt taking it into her head, that either I had allowed too scanty a pattern, or that she had outgrown them; out of mere good-

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will and simplicity, has lengthened all her petticoats to such a ridiculous size, that they almost come down to the buckles of her shoes; I protest one can scarce see whether she has any ancles.

On this a gentleman, who stood pretty near, approached Lady Allmode; and, with a most ironical tone, replied to what she had said in these words—

Gentleman. Your ladyship must excuse the mistake your aunt has made. I fancy the fashion of going half naked may not yet have reached so far as Wales.

Lady Allmode. You certainly speak the rationalii of the thing, Sir. Few of these mountaineers regard any thing but loading their tables with provisions; feasting their tenants, paying their debts, standing up for the liberties of their country, and such like antiquated obsolete customs. For my part, all my faculties are immersed in a profundity of astonishment, to think that my aunt could marry and settle among such aliens to politeness, such heathens to the laws of good-breeding and the drawing-room.

Gentleman. Perhaps, Madam, the customs and manners you mention were in vogue at the time of your aunt's marriage?

Lady Allmode. I protest, Sir, you have hit upon the solution of this enigma. It was, indeed, in the reign of Queen Anne that she married.

I had seen enough of this fine lady, and did not chuse to have my Tablets crowded with any more of her unintelligible jargon; so retired to another part of the room, where I saw three ladies got together, who seemed very earnest in discourse. But little was I like to be the better for my near approach; for being on the topick of scandal, each was so full, and so highly delighted with the thoughts of it, that all speaking at the same time, prevented me from hearing distinctly what was said by any of them; and all I could gather, at last, was, that a certain lady of their acquaintance had been caught with her footman.

As I had been informed of the particulars of this story before, the foible of the transgressing fair did not so much engross my meditations, as the pleasure those of her own sex seemed to take in exposing it; and I could not help saying to myself, with the poet—

‘ There is a lust in man, no charm can tame,
‘ Of loudly publishing his neighbour’s shame.
‘ On eagle’s wings immortal scandals fly;
‘ While virtuous actions are but born, and die.’

But this was a place more proper to collect matter for reflection hereafter, than to indulge it at present; so I passed on among the gaming-tables, which were eleven in number, and none of them unoccupied. Here it was pleasant enough to observe the various attitudes of those who played: and I think there is not a more sure way of judging people’s dispositions, than to see them at this diversion. Some of those who swept the stakes, received the favours Fortune bestowed on them with an ease and calmness which shewed they had not been over-anxious whether she smiled or frowned; but there were many more, who snatched up the glittering metal with a greediness which sufficiently demonstrated that avarice was the chief excitement to what they did. As for the losers, it gave me an infinite satisfaction to see the unconcerned behaviour of some few among them; while others, again, filled me with a no less sensible disquiet at their impatience. I was ashamed to find a gentleman of rank and fortune forget all politeness, and sometimes even common decency, to those who had his money in their pockets; and sorry in my heart to see a lady bite her lips, wrinkle her forehead with unbecoming frowns, distort every feature, and disfigure all the charms which nature had bestowed on her, for the loss of what was not worth half that anxiety to preserve. ‘ Good Heaven!’ said I to myself, ‘ if this be the effect of gaming, what madness is it to venture one’s peace in that uncertain gulph!’

The beautiful Ismena was this night among the number of the unfortunates, but not of the impatient. I stood behind her chair, and saw her empty a well-filled purse, and take out of it even the last guinea with a smile. She was, indeed, a young lady lately come to the possession of a very large fortune, and could not want what she had thrown away: but the same might also be said of Clarinda, who played at the same table with her, and had also lost a considerable sum to Sir Charles Fairlove, with whom these two ladies had been engaged

engaged the whole evening at picquet. But see the difference! the latter of them rose from the table in a fury, tore her fan, and cried—

Clarinda. Curse the cards!—I will play no more this night, that I am resolved; at least with Sir Charles.

Ismena. Nay, Madam, we have no reason to be angry with Sir Charles, for having done by us what we would gladly have done by him. For my part, though he has stripped me of all I had about me, I am as good friends with him as ever.

Sir Charles. I hope so, Madam; otherwise the good luck I have had at play would prove the greatest misfortune of my life.

Clarinda. The devil's in the cards to-night, I think! I never lost at picquet in my life before; and now I have thrown away—I cannot justly say how much, but I'll see.

She then turned to the table, and poured out of a purse what was remaining in it; and having counted the sum, went on in the same heat as before.

Clarinda. Yes, by Heaven I thought so!—No less than six and twenty pieces!

Sir Charles. I should be sorry, Madam, to give you any disquiet on the score of such a trifle; but I can do no more than offer you a chance for regaining all you have lost. If you please, I will stake the whole against five of yours.

Clarinda. I should lose that too, I suppose.

Ismena. Venture it, however. If you lose it, I'll be your halves, and send you the money to-morrow morning.

Clarinda. Well, then, I will make one more essay.

With these words, she sat down again. They played; she was the winner; and now appeared as gay and happy as she had lately been discontented. Sir Charles smiled, with some disdain, at this reverse in her humour; and, turning to Ismena, said—

Sir Charles. Now, Madam, you must take up the winner.

Ismena. She must give me credit, then, Sir. You both know I have no stake to lay down.

Clarinda. You must excuse me for that, Madam; it may turn my luck. Besides, one has no heart to play, when one does not see the money on the table.

Sir Charles. Well, then, beautiful Ismena, I will give you credit; or, if you please, will play upon the square, my honour against yours.

Ismena. With all my heart, Sir Charles.

The ill-nature, the ill-manners, and, indeed, the ingratitude of Clarinda, in refusing to give the credit of a stake at cards to a friend who had just before offered to pay half the losses she should sustain in playing with another, made that young lady as disagreeable in my eyes, as the sweetness of disposition and generosity of the sprightly Ismena made her charming to a much greater degree than ever she had appeared to me before; all lovely, as it must be confessed she is. But, to proceed. Ismena having accepted the challenge of Sir Charles, she tried once more what chance would do for her: chance was still against her, and Sir Charles again the conqueror. The game being over, she said, laughing—

Ismena. Well, I may now sing—'Fortune is my foe;' and content myself, for the remainder of the night, with being an humble spectator, since I am not in a condition to play myself.

Sir Charles. It will be your own fault, then, Madam, if you are. I believe I have an hundred and some odd pieces about me, which are all at your service.

Ismena. I thank you, Sir Charles; but I do not chuse to risque so much at one sitting. I do not care, however, if I become your debtor for twenty pieces.

Sir Charles. You do me a pleasure, Madam, in accepting any part of the offer I made you. There is the trifle you mention: if you want more, I beg you will command it.

Ismena. No, Sir, I am determined to play no farther than this. I am much obliged to you for the favour, and will return it to-morrow morning.

Sir Charles. There is no occasion, Madam. I have business your way to-morrow morning; and, if you permit me that honour, will wait on you about twelve.

Ismena. You may depend, Sir, on my being at home.

Clarinda, who had not opened her mouth all this time, no sooner saw her fair friend receive the money, than she laid her hand on hers, and, with a gay

air, said to her—' Now, my dear, I am ready for you, if you please; and willing to venture as much with you as you have borrowed of Sir Charles.' To this Ismena replied, with more seriousness than she was wont to put on—' No, Madam, I have been very unlucky here, and am resolved to change hands; I see Lady Longmore has given out at the whist table yonder, I'll go and take her place.'

With these words, she rose hastily from her seat, and did as she had said. Sir Charles followed her to the other table, and stood behind her chair till he saw her win more than the sum he had lent her. On the company's breaking up, she looked round the room for Sir Charles, in order, as I suppose, to return the money to him; but if she had any such design, he had taken care to prevent it, by leaving the place before she had done playing. This action of Sir Charles, joined to some amorous glances I had perceived him to regard her with, made me suspect he had some farther view than mere complaisance in what he had done; but as he was generally accounted a man of honour, and she had an unblemished character, I suspended my judgment till I should see the event of the visit she promised to receive from him the next morning.

After I had quitted this scene of gay confusion, as Mr. Addison elegantly expresses it, and had time to ruminate on the transactions that evening had presented me with; Sir Charles and Ismena ran very much in my head, but did not so totally engross my attention, as to make me negligent to all others. I had heard several of the assembly say to each other, that Miss Allmode was a most beautiful young creature, and would certainly be the reigning toast of the town, if not spoiled by the affectation of her mother; and this distinct description gave me a curiosity both to see the girl, and in what manner her self-sufficient ladyship behaved towards her. Accordingly I laid down a plan for my progression the next morning, which was this: to go to Lady Allmode's early, and from thence to Ismena at the time Sir Charles had appointed. I then began to remember that the night was far advanced, and went to bed, as it is probable some of my readers may find it necessary to do at this time.

CHAP. VI.

CONTAINS SUCH THINGS AS ARE NOT OFTEN TO BE MET WITH, NEITHER IN THE ONE NOR THE OTHER SEX; YET ARE, OR AT LEAST OUGHT TO BE, EQUALLY INTERESTING TO BOTH.

I Rose next morning more early than I had been accustomed to do, in order to prepare for my two visits; but, in spite of all the expedition I could practise, I found myself obliged to postpone either the one or the other till another day. So much time was elapsed, first in transcribing what I had seen at Lady Playfield's, and then in getting the dialogues engraved on my Tablets expunged, by the pure fingers of my yet unpolluted virgin; that, when all was ready, the clock wanted but few minutes of twelve. I hesitated not whether I should go to Lady Allmode's or to Ismena; for, being prepossessed in favour of the latter, I went thither in a lucky time. Sir Charles Fairlove was just stepping out of his chair: I followed him up stairs; and Ismena received him with great gaiety, accompanied with an equal air of modesty. As soon as they were seated, she said to him—

Ismena. Your money was very fortunate, Sir Charles: I did not lose one guinea after I became your borrower.

Sir Charles. Madam, I congratulate myself for being so happy to serve you, though on so insignificant an occasion; but should be better pleased to have it in my power to do so in much greater things.

Ismena. I doubt not of your generosity; and, if ever I am reduced to the same exigence again, it is likely may have recourse to the same hand. In the mean time, Sir Charles, let me return the favour you have already conferred upon me.

Sir Charles. This trifle, Madam, is neither worth your returning nor my receiving; nor should I have ever thought on it, if I had not given you credit on an infinitely more valuable account.

Ismena. Credit! As how, Sir Charles?

Sir Charles. Yes, Madam, a debt I am too impatient to wait long for the payment of, and am come to claim.

Ismena. You rally well, Sir Charles; but,

but, as I cannot comprehend the purport, am not prepared to give an answer.

Sir Charles. No, i'faith, Madam, you will find me extremely serious; sure you cannot be so strangely forgetful as not to recollect what you lost to me last night at play?

Ismena. I lost nothing but what I paid, Sir Charles.

Sir Charles. Nothing, Madam?

Ismena. No, upon my honour.

Sir Charles. You have named the very thing—your honour, Madam. When a lady ventures her honour at a gaming-table, and is so unlucky to lose, she must expect to pay the forfeit.

Ismena. What do you mean, Sir Charles?

Sir Charles. My meaning needs no explanation, Madam; you lost your honour to me, and I now demand the immediate possession of what I fairly won.

Ismena. Ridiculous!

Sir Charles. Madam, the contempt with which you treat my pretensions will not take away the validity of them. What was once your honour, is now no longer so, but mine, and at my disposal; and you would not, sure, go about to defraud me of the good that Fortune has bestowed upon me?

With these words, he threw his arms about her waist, with a freedom, which shewed he indeed looked upon her as his own: she seemed a little alarmed at this action, and, starting from him, endeavoured to repulse the temerity he was guilty of, by saying to him—

Ismena. Forbear; this fooling is offensive.

Sir Charles. Madam, this coyness is trifling; I am surprized you will oblige me to have recourse to force for what is so much my due; and I should set a higher value upon it cheerfully resigned.

He then caught hold of her a second time, and made an offer to bear her into another room: the grasp he had taken of her, was not so strenuous, however, but that she easily disengaged herself; and, having done so, cried out with a voice and air full of the extremest disdain—

Ismena. Till this action, I scarce could think you were in earnest. Bafe, presuming man, how dare you entertain thoughts so unworthy of me!

Sir Charles. How dare you, Madam, hazard on the chance of a game at cards what seems so precious to you?

Ismena. Oh, despicable! to turn that

into a matter of seriousness which was only meant in jest!

Sir Charles. We men, Madam, take all the advantages we can, when we play with a fine woman; and you may be assured, I shall not easily be prevailed upon to relinquish those I have gained over you.

Ismena. The vain idea will little avail your vile purpose.

Sir Charles. You may be mistaken, Madam: the laws of Westminster Hall, indeed, will scarcely take any cognizance of an affair of this nature; but those laws by which the polite world are governed, I mean the laws of gaming, will infallibly give it on my side. That pride of yours will be humbled, when you see your stake of honour become the publick jest, and all that has passed between us the subject of a news-paper.

Ismena. I am confounded! You cannot certainly be the monster you appear!

Sir Charles. I would not wish you, Madam, to put me to the proof.

Ismena. Oh, Heavens! to what has one unguarded word exposed me!

She could not utter this exclamation without letting fall some tears, which I perceived had a great effect on Sir Charles, by the change it occasioned in his countenance: he affected, however, to take no notice of it, and resuming his former boldness, went on—

Sir Charles. You see, Madam, how it is; you are entirely in my power; and, if I cannot have my agreement, I will have my revenge, or at least an equivalent for both.

Ismena. What equivalent!

Sir Charles. You must redeem your forfeited honour by a sum of money.

Ismena. Name it, then.

Sir Charles. Let me consider, Madam—a woman's honour, as times now are, and beauty renders itself so cheap, will bear but a low price at the market; but, as you are well-born, well accomplished, are extremely handsome, and have more perfections than most of your sex can boast of, I think five hundred pounds is the least I can demand.

Ismena. You shall have it, Sir.

With this, she ran hastily to a little cabinet that stood in the room, and having taken from thence what she wanted, turned again to the table, saying—

Ismena. Those two Bank-bills, Sir, contain the sum you mention; take them, and ease me of your presence.

Sir Charles. I must first examine, Madam,

Madam, if they are genuine: yes, they are right; and now, methinks, 'tis pity to rob you of so much money; five hundred pounds will purchase five hundred pretty trinkets, and I cannot receive it without feeling some concern.

Ismena. Oh, you need be under no concern on that score; were it five times the sum, I would gladly give it to be rid for ever, both of you and your impudent demand.

Sir Charles. Yet, in spite of all this severity, I shall willingly restore these bills on one condition.

Ismena. Sir, I shall make no conditions with you; therefore, be gone, and leave me.

Sir Charles. Not till you have heard me, Madam. The condition I would stipulate, is only this, that you will make a solemn promise never to play again, except for mere diversion, with some select friends, who you are certain will take no ungenerous advantage of you.

Ismena. There is little occasion for me to bind myself by a promise to avoid a thing which has already proved so mischievous: the insults I have received from you, will make me detest the sight of cards, and fly the society of all who pursue that dangerous amusement.

Sir Charles. It is enough; my ends are answered: and thus, on my knees, let me restore your bills, and with them, a heart which long has been devoted to you, and never harboured a wish to your dishonour.

Never had I known greater anxiety for any thing not relating to myself, or my particular friends, than I did for the issue of this conversation. I had been extremely scandalized at some part of Sir Charles's behaviour; yet, by many indications, could not set him down in my mind for the mercenary villain he affected to be; and was now as much rejoiced to see a likelihood of not having been deceived in my conjectures in his favour, as the reader will presently be convinced. Ismena, being too much amazed at this sudden turn to make an immediate reply, he went on thus, still kneeling—

Sir Charles. Oh, Ismena, forgive the seeming brutality I have been guilty of; I counterfeited the libertine, the villain, only to shew you there was a possibility for you to have met with such a one in reality; and assumed the most odious character, in order to render yours more

truly amiable. The tender passion you inspired me with, has made me keep a watchful eye over all your actions. I found you perfect in every thing except a too great readiness to follow the example of others in the destructive love of play. I know the dangers to which your sex are exposed by it, and that there were many snares spread for your innocence in particular; by this means, even last night, there were some in company who wanted but the same opportunity I had to behave as I have done, though with far different views. Oh! pardon, therefore, the only stratagem I could think of to clear your mind of a propensity which might in time have sullied all its brightness.

Ismena. Rise, Sir Charles; the diversity, I might say, indeed, the perplexity of my thoughts, hindered me, till now, from observing the posture you were in. Pray be seated, Sir. If I may give credit to your words, I am infinitely obliged to you for the care you took of my reputation, when you saw it so totally neglected by myself.

Sir Charles. No, Madam, say not so; I dare believe you never have failed in a due regard for your reputation, and am certain that the breath of slander has never presumed to blast it; and I could not mean to reproach you for any thing that has been, but to warn you against what might be. An immoderate inclination for gaming in your sex, I take to be the same as an immoderate inclination to drinking is in ours: both are equally intoxicating and destructive to right reason; they make the brain grow giddy, incapable of reflection, or any other pursuit than the darling folly; and they run headlong on, enveloped in a mist of errors, where fortune, fame, and peace of mind, are sometimes irrecoverably lost.

Ismena. Oh, Sir Charles, you have opened my eyes to see what my inadvertency might one day have plunged me in.

Sir Charles. I know very well, Madam, you wanted only to be reminded of the danger, to enable you to avoid it. The manner in which I have done so, may have, perhaps, appeared too presuming; but I feared more gentle methods might not have had the effect.

Ismena. Make no apologies, Sir Charles; I am now convinced you meant me well, and I thank you for it.

Sir Charles. If you accept it as a proof of friendship, it may in time en-

gave you to believe, that a sincere and tender friendship in a person of my sex, to one of yours, deserves a softer name, and call it love.

Ismena. We will not cavil about names; but must acknowledge, Sir Charles, by what motive soever you have been actuated, the benefit is mine.

Sir Charles. How bless'd am I in this confession! But, charming *Ismena*, may I not be permitted to wait on you sometimes, and have leave to hope the services I shall hereafter pay will not be rejected?

Ismena. I flatter myself with being able to regulate my future conduct, so as not to give you occasion to offer any of that frightful sort you have done this morning; and, if I should relapse into my former errors, could neither expect nor deserve you should take the same trouble for my reformation.

She spoke these words with so obliging a smile, that Sir Charles could not forbear testifying the transport he was in, by imprinting several passionate kisses on one of her hands; after which, looking on her with an equal mixture of tenderness and respect, he said—

Sir Charles. Incomparable *Ismena*! how impossible is it for me to express either what you deserve, or what I feel in a full sensibility of your perfections!

Ismena. I desire you will not go about to express either the one or the other. The only merit I can boast of is, in being so early convinced of my fault; and that I am so, is wholly owing to yourself. For I confess to you, Sir Charles, that though it is but lately I have begun to like play at all, yet, by conversing with those who seem to have no other way of passing their time, it grew by very swift degrees more pleasing to me; and I believe that it would, in time, have become so habitual to me, that I should have expected the hour of sitting down to cards as naturally as that of sitting down to dinner. But, in the mirror you have presented to me, I now see, that to indulge this amusement to an excess, is not only a folly below the dignity of a thinking mind, but also a kind of Scylla or Charybdis, formed by ourselves in the ocean of life, as if on purpose to wreck our fortunes, honour, reputation, and every thing that is dear.

Sir Charles. Oh, Madam! every

word you speak on this occasion thrills me to the very soul; I am charmed, I am ravished to find in you such solid reason, such an amazing quickness of apprehension.

Ismena. You are relapsing into the panegyrick strain; but I will hear no more of it. You must give me leave to play the monitor in my turn; I have been your convert, and you must now be mine. Remember, Sir Charles, that to listen to the tongue of flattery, is no less pernicious than the folly you have taught me to be ashamed of.

Sir Charles. I grant it, Madam; but the just praises of real virtue cannot cause a blush either in the face of the giver or receiver.

Ismena. Well, I find you will have the better of the argument, whether the tenet you take upon you to maintain be right or wrong; therefore, to put an end to it, what think you of a turn or two in the Mall this morning?

Sir Charles. Madam, I shall be happy to attend you any where.

She then called for her capuchin and little muff; which being immediately brought, Sir Charles gave her his hand to lead her down stairs, and I retired to my apartment.

I had met with nothing a great while that gave me a more sensible satisfaction, than to find a lady, in all the pride of blooming youth, beautiful, gay, and surrounded with a crowd of flatterers, bear with so much cheerfulness the conviction of her error, and testify so much gratitude to the person to whom she was indebted for her reformation. The rough method he had taken for this purpose, was so far from raising any resentment in her, after once knowing the motive, that she looked upon him as her best friend, esteemed, and loved him for it; conscious that it required no less than such a proceeding to rouse her from that thoughtlessness which alone had made her fall into an error, the danger of which she might otherwise have too late perceived.

I thought I had discovered something in these two accomplished persons, that seemed to me as if Heaven had ordained them for each other, and I soon found I had not been mistaken. They are now married with the highest approbation of all friends on both sides; and, in the opinion of as many as have the pleasure of

of their acquaintance, bid fair to be one of the most happy pairs that ever entered into Hymen's bands.

CHAP. VII.

THE AUTHOR HAS BEEN IN SOME DEBATE WITHIN HIMSELF, WHETHER HE SHOULD INSERT OR NOT, AS HE IS CONSCIOUS IT WILL BE LITTLE RELISHED BY THE FASHIONABLE GENTEEL PART OF HIS READERS.

THERE is something very unaccountable in an over-curious disposition; it makes us eager, impatient, anxious, indefatigable, in prying into things which promise us not the least pleasure in the discovery of when known. A reader who has not this propensity in his nature, will doubtless think, by what I said of Lady Allmode in the fifth chapter, that I had already seen enough of her behaviour to keep me from being desirous of seeing more. But as every one is willing to find some excuse or other, even for the silliest things he can be guilty of, so I thought, that in being a spectator of Lady Allmode's conduct in her own family, and the manner in which she trained up her daughter, something might present itself to me that would more than compensate for the time I should expend in going to her house.

Accordingly I went, and gained an easy access, the door happening to be open just as I reached it, to let out a footman in a gay livery, who had come to deliver some message; but was a good deal bewildered on my entrance, as I had never been in the house before, and was entirely unacquainted with the situation of any of the rooms. The measure of time is always doubled when we wait for an event with impatience. I remained not long, however, in this dilemma: a servant running hastily up the back stairs, with some drinking glasses on a silver waiter in his hand, I followed him into a room where a woman, by her appearance, I guessed was her ladyship's Abigail, received from him what he brought, and carried it into an inner chamber, the door of which she shut after her, but not so suddenly as to prevent my entering with her.

Here I found Lady Allmode: but had

she appeared to me in any other place, should never have known her for the same I had seen at Lady Playfield's route; so vast a difference is it in the power of art sometimes to make. At the time of my coming in, she was under the operation of having her eyebrows shaped with a small pair of pincers, by one of those persons who go by the name of tyre-women; but, in my opinion, ought rather to be called facemenders, since their business is not so much to ornament the head as to rectify the defects of the features. The important work being over, Lady Allmode turned to a magnifier that stood upon her toilet, to see if all was right; and having looked into it, cried out hastily—

Lady. Oh, Mrs. Prim, sure your eyes are in eclipse to-day! you have left no less than three exuberant hairs on my right brow, and I think arch'd it somewhat higher than the other.

Mrs. Prim. I beg pardon of your ladyship, but I will presently remedy that error.

On this the artist employed her little instrument for a second essay; after which Lady Allmode looked in the glass again, and said—

Lady. It is very well now; but I look wretchedly to-day, and it is no wonder. What do you think, Mrs. Prim? That careless oaf there put me to bed last night without my spermaceti mask.

Mrs. Prim. That was a great omission, indeed, Madam; but your ladyship must forgive it, Mrs. Pinup does not use to neglect these things.

Pinup. I am very sorry for it, Mrs. Prim; but it was so late when her ladyship went to bed, and her ladyship was so sleepy.

Lady. And your foolishness so sleepy too, I suppose. But that is not all, Mrs. Prim; the creature threw it into some corner or other where Veni got at it, and this morning it was found half devoured.

Pinup. Your ladyship knows I have almost cried my eyes out about it, and that I offered to bespeak another, and pay for it out of my own pocket.

Lady. Pay for it, idiot!—But tell me, creature, what atonement can'st thou ever make for these depredations on my countenance? Here I shall lose a whole day; for 'tis impossible I can think of appearing in publick.

Mrs. Prim.

Mrs. Prim. I dare answer for Mrs. Pinup, that she will never be guilty of the like fault again; therefore I beg your ladyship will forgive her.

Lady. Yes, yes, I have forgiven her, and I do forgive her; but she must expect to be told of it sometimes: if she had lived with some ladies, they would have turned her out of doors that instant; *mais toujours les douceurs du cour* lay an embargo on my indignation.

Pinup. Your ladyship is all goodness.

Lady. Well, well, say no more about it; I am sorry I struck you; but take the Dresden suit I had on yesterday, and let me see you in it.

Pinup. I humbly thank your ladyship.

Lady. Say no more of it. Oh, *mon Dieu!* I begin to feel the effects of my disconcertion; every membrane through my whole frame has a pulsation in it; give me something to take this instant, or I shall faint. But as to the spermaceti mask, is it not possible for you to get one ready for me before I sleep, else my face will be a perfect nutmeg-grater by to-morrow morning?

Mrs. Prim. Oh, your ladyship need be under no apprehension on that score, I always keep several; they want only sprinkling with a little orange-flower water, to take off the scent; I will send your ladyship one this afternoon. Has your ladyship any farther commands?

Lady. Yes, you may send me a box of red for my cheeks; but do not let it be quite so high-coloured as the last.

Mrs. Prim. I shall take care to mix it so as to please your ladyship.—In speaking this, she made her exit with abundance of low curtsies.

Pinup was returning to her lady's chamber, but met her just coming out, in order to pass into another room: on seeing her she said to her—

Lady. I think this girl takes a long time in dressing; go and see if she is ready, and bid her come to me.

Finding now that there was some probability of my seeing the young lady, which had been, indeed, the chief motive of my going thither, I attended Lady Allmode where she went, and placed myself in one corner of the room; where I did not wait above three or four minutes before Pinup, who had gone immediately on her errand, returned leading Miss Allmode. She seemed to be

about fourteen years of age; her face was extremely pretty, and I believe nature had given her a shape no less excellent, if it had not been deformed by her stay-maker. On her approach, Lady Allmode took her by the arm, turned her round several times, and examined her whole dress from head to foot; after which, looking very well pleased, she said—

Lady. Ay, Miss, now you look like what you are; I protest, I scarce knew you for my own child, in the obsolete condition you came from the country. Are you not highly delighted with yourself?

Miss. No, indeed, Madam; I think, since 'tis the fashion to have one's cloaths made in this manner, there ought to be as many chimnies in a room as there are chairs.

Lady. Sure, Miss, you are not cold?

Miss. It would be very strange, Madam, if I were not, when my stays are so contrived that the air comes down to the very bottom of my back, and below the pit of my stomach; and my petticoats so short, that I am every minute fancying I have tucked them up in order to have my legs and feet washed; then as to my ears, I do declare I feel the wind blow from the one to the other, and pierces into my very brain.

Lady. O fye, Miss; this being in the country has spoiled you. Whatever is the fashion is never either too cold or too hot.

Miss. I must beg your ladyship's pardon; for I am certain this fashion is a great deal too much of both. The tightness of my sleeves, the load of flounces at my elbow, and the huge semicircles, as heavy as panniers, hanging on each hip, make some parts of me sweat, while all the rest are freezing.

Lady. Oh hideous! Frightful!—Sweat! What a word is there from the mouth of a fine young lady! Whenever you have occasion to complain of too much warmth, you should always say, I perspire. But I am surprized you should not be charmed with so becoming a dress.

Miss. I feel uneasy, and quite uncomfortable, Madam.

Lady. A little use will reconcile you to it. Without vanity, Miss, you are exceeding handsome; and now I have made you fit to appear in publick, the praises that will be given you, and the

fine things said to you, will raise such a *gaieté du coeur*, as will make you forget all that you call uncomfortable.

Miss. I should be glad, Madam, if any thing would do that.

Lady. You must learn to know yourself, Miss. Look in the glass; you have fine eyes, a very lovely mouth, a well-turned face, a delicate complexion, good hair; in fine, you are a compleat beauty. But what is beauty without the possessor understands how to manage it to advantage? A milk-maid may be a beauty, and no one take any notice of her. You must practise the art of displaying every charm, and rendering yourself conspicuous.

Miss. Indeed, Madam, I am quite ignorant of these things.

Lady. I perceive you are, Miss; but that is not your fault; my formal aunt has never given you any instructions in this point, I suppose: a few lessons, however, will soon put you in the way to make the most of what nature has bestowed upon you. In the first place, Miss, you must be sure to thrust out your chin as far as you are able; when you come into a room, always let your chin be the first thing seen of you, as if it were the harbinger of the rest of your person. Secondly, you must never keep your two hands together, in that stiff country manner you now do, for above the space of a moment; but throw sometimes the one and sometimes the other carelessly back, and lean it on your hip; but when you are speaking, be sure you employ both in gestures that may enforce attention to what you say. Then, as for your eyes, Miss, you must always keep them broad open, and be sure to have the last look of every one that takes notice of you.

Miss. Does your ladyship mean the men as well as the women?

Lady. Undoubtedly, the men to chuse. A polite woman, and who is fashionably genteel, is never ashamed of any thing she either sees or hears.

Her ladyship was going on with some farther directions concerning the management of the eyes, when she was interrupted by a footman, who came to acquaint her, that a person who called himself Monsieur Le Petit Solee had brought her ladyship a dozen pair of French shoes; on which she cried out in a kind of transport—'Oh, bring him up! bring him up this minute! I have been in-

volved in the utmost distress; I have had nothing but odious English shoes upon my feet for a whole week past.'

As I was now heartily weary of my situation, and had no curiosity to see either Monsieur Le Petit Solee, or his French shoes, I took the opportunity of the door being open, and left this scene of folly and affectation, regretting the time I had thrown away in being there.

CHAP. VIII.

WHEREIN THE POWER OF BEAUTY, WHEN ACCOMPANIED WITH VIRTUE, IS DISPLAYED, IN A VERY REMARKABLE, AS WELL AS AFFECTING OCCURRENCE.

VANITY, though placed rather among the follies than the vices of human nature, is yet sometimes productive of the very worst we can be guilty of; and the least mischief it does, when indulged to an excess, is to render the person possessed of it obstinate, proud, impatient of contradiction, deaf to reproof, full of imaginary merit, and apt to despise what is truly so in another. This weakness, to give it no worse a name, is generally ascribed to the softer sex; who being from their very childhood accustomed to flattery and praise, are too ready to believe they are in reality the angels and goddesses they are told they are: but, in my opinion, it is doing great injustice to the ladies, to say they are the only culpable; since we often find men who, without having the same excuse, are no less liable to fall into the same error.

Mutantius is one of the most graceful and most accomplished gentlemen of the present age. He has learning, wit, honour, generosity, and good-nature. In fine, he is such as might give him a just title to universal admiration, were he but a little less conscious of deserving it. To render his fine qualities yet more conspicuous, he had the advantages of being descended from a very ancient family, and in possession of an ample fortune. He had not long been arrived at age, before several considerable matches were proposed to him: all the men of his acquaintance, who had sisters or daughters, courted his alliance. Whenever he appeared, the ladies put on their best

best looks; and not a few there were, who could not help betraying by their eyes the secret languishment of their hearts.

Having his choice of so many, was probably the cause that for a long time hindered him from attaching himself to any particular object. He was polite and gallant to all, but made a serious address to none. He would pay his morning devours to one, walk in the Mall with another, dine with a third, drink tea with a fourth, attend a fifth to the play, or some other publick entertainment: in a word, he divided his respects so equally between each, that no one had reason either to exult on the power of her own charms, or dread those of her competitors. The little deity of soft desires would not, however, suffer a man so formed for love to remain always among the number of insensibles. At length, a glance shot from Aristella's eyes was a dart that reached his very soul; all the different graces he had seen in other beauties, seemed now to him to be summed up in her.

Aristella was, indeed, very lovely, and had been well educated; but her father, by gaming and other extravagancies, had reduced his estate so low, that when divided between four daughters, which he left at his decease, the income was scarce sufficient to buy them cloaths according to their birth. Two of them, however, were married to tradesmen of good repute in the city; and a third to a gentleman of a small estate in the country. Aristella, who was the youngest, and the only one unprovided for, lived sometimes with one, and sometimes with another, of the sisters; and by this means, having few expences besides her dress, was enabled to appear in as genteel a manner as any woman of a moderate fortune could do.

It was at the house of one of her brother-in-law's, who was a linen-draper, and served Mutantius with hollands and cambricks, that he first beheld her. Happening to call there when the master was abroad, he was desired to walk into the parlour till his return. Aristella was at work with her sister when he came in; but the latter, knowing he was a good customer, threw aside what she was about, and received him with a great deal of politeness. Her husband not coming home so soon as he was expected, she made tea. Mutantius rea-

dily accepted the little regale she presented to him, as it gave him an opportunity of feasting his eyes on her fair sister. On their entering into conversation, the tongue of Aristella lost her nothing of what her eyes had gained; and as her beauty had in an instant captivated his heart, so her wit rivetted the chain, and made the conquest sure.

The tradesman at last returning, Mutantius, after having agreed for some things he wanted in the shop, and ordered them to be sent home, took an unwilling leave; but carried with him an idea, which had afterwards more influence than he at first imagined. Love, in it's beginnings, plays wantonly about the heart, tickling it with flattering images; but having once got full possession there, rules with tyrannick sway, and bears down all before it. Mutantius indulged the pleasing contemplation of Aristella's beauty till he was no longer able to live without seeing her, and for this purpose went again to the linen-draper's, pretending there were some things he had forgot to bespeak when he was there before. After having bought those things which the seeming want of had given him an excuse for going thither so soon again, and some previous discourse on ordinary matters, he told the draper that he should be glad to have his wife's advice concerning the trimming of some shirts which were then making for him. To this the other replied, that his wife would think herself honoured in doing him any service, but that she was at that time unfortunately abroad.

Mutantius was not sorry to hear she was out of the way; and resumed, briskly—'Well, then; I think it will be equal to me, if the young lady who was with her when I had the pleasure of drinking tea here, will do me that favour; she seemed, I thought, to have good-nature enough to grant such a request.'—'You mean my sister, Sir,' cried the draper. 'I think your wife called her so,' answered Mutantius. 'Yes, Sir,' rejoined the former; 'but she is gone down to Kent this morning.'—'I thought she had lived with you,' said Mutantius. 'Not constantly, Sir,' replied he; 'but she has left us now sooner than she would have done, on account of her sister's lying-in.'

It was easy for a man of so much wit,

and of so much design as Mutantius now had in his head, to get from the honest, unsuspecting draper, all he wanted to be informed of in relation to the circumstances of Aristella. As the inclinations of this gentleman, vehemently amorous as they were, had not at present the least tendency to marriage with the young beauty, concerning whose affairs he had been so inquisitive, he was far from being mortified on hearing she had no fortune, and was in a manner dependant upon her kindred; nor thought it less conducive to the interest of his passion that she was removed into the country, where he imagined he might find a more easy method of winning her to his desires than he could have done in town, under the eye of a sister who, by the little he had seen of her, he perceived to be a woman of great discretion. He lost no time; but the very next day, attended by one servant, posted down to Canterbury, within a quarter of a mile of which city Aristella at present resided.

Having no acquaintance in that part of the country, he took up his lodgings in one of the best inns; where pretending that it was mere curiosity to see that ancient city which had brought him thither, several offered to accompany him to those places which most deserved the attention of a traveller. Among the number of these hospitable persons was the brother-in-law of Aristella. It is easy to suppose that Mutantius made use of all the arts he was master of to insinuate himself into the good graces of a person whose acquaintance was so necessary to his design: and, indeed, had not this accident happened, there seemed little probability of his accomplishing them; for Aristella kept so close in the house, that though he had been four days at Canterbury, and taken all imaginable pains to get a glimpse of her, he never yet had been so happy.

Mutantius had something in him no less engaging to the men, than enchanting to the women: he knows how to suit himself to the humour of every one he converses with; it was therefore not difficult for him to cultivate a friendship with a plain country gentleman, who, free from all guile, was equally free from all distrust. Beechly, for so he was called, had no other fault than loving his bottle too well; which Mutantius perceiving,

fell in with this foible, and thereby gained his whole heart.

These two gentlemen drinking together very late, Mutantius had plied the other so fast with glasses, that he became more than ordinarily intoxicated. Our lover obliged him to suffer himself to be attended home by his footman, and the next morning sent a polite message to enquire of his health. Beechly took this so kindly, that he came immediately astent to the lodgings of Mutantius, to shew that he was well, and to desire he would do him the honour of dining with him that day. 'My wife,' said he, 'is in the straw: but she has a sister, who is at present with us; a good, smart, well-behaved girl, and will receive you in the best manner she is able.'

It is not to be doubted, but that the heart of Mutantius fluttered with the most rapturous sensation, on hearing himself invited to a place where he was sure of enjoying the company of her he so much languished for, and had taken such pains to pursue. It is needless to say that he readily accepted of obliging a summons, nor that he prolonged the hour of complying with it. He was met by Beechly, at the gate, with all imaginable demonstrations of a sincere welcome, and conducted into the parlour; where Aristella, who soon after entered, was presented to him.

Whatever emotions Mutantius might feel in approaching to salute her, they were yet inferior to hers, in the first surprize of seeing him there. She had heard her brother Beechly talk of a fine gentleman lately come to Canterbury, and had that morning received orders from him to prepare a handsome dinner for his entertainment; but as she had not heard him mention the name of his new friend, and had no curiosity to ask any thing concerning him, could little expect he was the same she had seen at her other sister's in London. She had, it seems, from the first interview with him, been possessed of sentiments in his favour; which, if not altogether so passionate as those she inspired him with, were yet no less soft and tender: but, conscious of the vast disparity between their fortunes, she had endeavoured to check the growth of an inclination which she thought could only be destructive of her peace. But on this second and unexpected meeting him again, the stifled

wishes of her soul burst out afresh; a sudden flow of joy rushed over her heart; which, joined to the surprize she was in, spread a kind of wild, though agreeable confusion, in her eyes and voice, while she made him those compliments which civility exacted from her to a stranger.

Mutantius, to whose penetrating eyes the change in her countenance was very visible, looked on it as a happy presage of the success of his design; and the secret pleasure this imagination gave him, brightened all his air, and added new graces to every thing he said or did; so that Aristella became now quite lost in love and admiration. This day proved, indeed, extremely fortunate to Mutantius: dinner was no sooner over, than Beechly was called out to a person who waited to speak with him on some business in another room; the lover took this opportunity of declaring his passion to his mistress, and relating to her the pains he had taken to get a sight of her; and the answers she made, though very modest and discreet, were such as gave him no reason to despair. Beechly returning, he broke off their conversation: he took Mutantius to shew him his garden; which, though not ornamented with statues, nor any exotick curiosities, were very pretty. Mutantius was lavish in his praises on every thing he saw; but, above all, his fancy seemed taken with a long grass walk, and a close arbour at the end of it. 'If I had such a walk as this in town,' said he, 'I should never trouble the Mall, Vauxhall, nor Ranelagh.'—'Since you cannot carry this with you,' replied Beechly, 'you shall be extremely welcome to make as much use of it as you think fit, while you stay in this part of the world.'

Mutantius thanked him; but said he was an early riser, and should chuse such a walk chiefly for the sake of meditation in a morning, and that to come at such hours might give too much trouble to the servants. 'I can easily remedy that difficulty, since you make it one,' answered the other. 'There is a door that opens behind the arbour into a little field, where I keep a cow: I seldom have occasion to make use of the key, and it is at your service; so you may come in as early or as late as you please, without disturbing any of my family, or being disturbed by them.'

The lover made a thousand acknow-

ledgments to him for this favour, and received the key; which, in his mind, he looked upon as a sure passport to all the happiness he wished at present to enjoy.

He went the next morning, taking a book in his hand, to prevent suspicion, in case he should be seen; though there was no great danger of that, as Beechly kept but two maids, and one man servant; who, it might be supposed, had too much business in a morning to ramble in the garden: but he might reasonably hope to meet with Aristella; who, having nothing to employ her time, might probably amuse some part of it in that agreeable place. It is likely, however, he might have been disappointed for many days together, if Fortune had not now befriended him, as she had hitherto done during the course of this adventure.

Aristella was there, indeed, before him, in the same walk, and very near the arbour through which he entered. She had come thither to gather cinquefoil for her sister, the nurse who attended her being apprehensive she would fall into a feverish disorder. It is likely she was little less surprized, on seeing him in that place, than she had been when introduced to him by her brother; but as I was not present, and have this part of the story from the report of others, can relate nothing of the particulars of their discourse; and only say, in general, that he spared no vows nor protestations to convince her of his passion; and that he prevailed on her to return to him again after having carried in the herbs. His entreaties, joined to her own secret inclinations, engaged her to see him the next day. This meeting was succeeded by another, that by a third, and so on for several mornings together, every one of them still more endearing him to her affections; but, in spite of the pleasure she took in his addresses, she could not keep herself from some doubt of the sincerity of his passion, whenever she reflected on the inequality of their fortunes. One day, expressing herself very emphatically on that occasion, he cried out—'Talk not of fortune; by Heaven, your heart is all I wish!' This he repeated so often, and so tenderly, that she at length confessed it was already his.

Having brought her to this point, he now thought proper to let her know the real

real aim of all his courtship: he began with telling her, that beauty such as hers merited to be set off with all the advantages of dress and grandeur; that she had wasted too much of her youth on a mean dependance on her kindred; and concluded with the offer of a large settlement; protesting to her, at the same time, that he would never marry any other woman, and that she should live in every thing like his wife except the name.

If a dagger had pierced the gentle breast of Aristella, it could not have given her more pain than did this cruel declaration. For some moments she was unable to make any reply, but burst into a flood of tears, and discovered all the symptoms of the most violent grief. He endeavoured to calm this tempest in her mind by all the arts that love and wit could inspire; but all was now in vain; a virtuous pride, by degrees, got the better of her sorrows; and, starting from him, she cried out—'Deceitful and ungenerous man! think not that your base desires shall triumph over the weakness I have confessed for you!—' 'No, I will never see you more; nor henceforward think of you but with horror and detestation!'

In speaking these words, she flew out of the arbour. Rage gave wings to her feet; yet Mutantius would certainly have overtaken her, if the sight of a man whom Beechly had employed to do some work in the garden had not made him turn back. He went to his lodgings much disconcerted at this accident; but the knowledge he had of Aristella's affection for him, kept him from totally despairing. He repaired to the arbour next morning, but no Aristella appeared; he went again, but had no better success. Resolved to see her, if possible, he made a visit at the house, and told Beechly, in a free manner, that he was come to take a second dinner with him; to which he replied with a compliment suitable to the occasion.

Mutantius was again disappointed: Aristella, hearing he was there, sent word to her brother that she had a violent tooth-ache, and desired he would excuse her from coming down. This drove the lover almost to distraction: he went home, wrote to her, and made his footman go, as of his own accord, to chat with the servants, and loiter about the house till he should see Aristella, and

deliver the letter to her. The fellow found means to execute his commission; Aristella took the letter on his presenting it to her, and went up into her chamber; but, after reflecting a little, would not trust her own heart so far as to read this dangerous epistle: she therefore put it under a cover; and, having sealed and directed it, came down, and gave it to the man, saying—'There's my answer to your master's letter.'

Never had the vanity of Mutantius met with so severe a shock; yet could he not forbear revering the virtue he attempted to destroy. If before he loved, he now adored her; and the more he considered her perfections, the more he found her worthy to be his wife; yet, when he thought of marriage, the idea of that state was irksome to him. He knew that at present he was the idol of the fair, but should cease to be so if once he became a husband. He could not bear to lose his darling admiration, yet was equally unable to bear life without the enjoyment of Aristella. After some debate within himself, his passion, however, got the better of his vanity, and he resolved to marry Aristella; but which way to let her know he meant to do so, seemed as great a difficulty as any he had passed through in attempting to seduce her: he was convinced she would neither see him, nor receive a letter from him; yet, in spite of all this, Love, fertile in contrivances, put a stratagem into his head which had the desired effect: it was this—

Beechly's new-born son had not been yet baptized, on account of the mother's having been more than ordinarily indisposed during her lying-in. He offered to be one of the sponsors, which the other gladly accepted. Aristella could not now avoid his presence; but behaved with so much reserve, scarce ever looking towards him, that a man less conscious of his own merit might have been abashed. After some time, when most of the company were engaged in conversation, he found an opportunity to say to her—'Madam, I beseech you will forgive the rash proposal I presumed to make you; be assured I have heartily repented of it, and have now no designs upon you but what are truly honourable.' To which she replied—'Sir, I shall never believe a man means me well, who has once thought so poorly of me.'—'I only beg,' resumed

sumed he, 'the liberty of entertaining you once more in private; and if what I have then to say does not merit your pardon and favour, I shall leave Canterbury, and perhaps the world, for ever.' He could add no more at that time, Beechly calling him to pledge him in a bumper to the young Christian; but, before they parted, he found means to enforce what he had last said with so moving an air, that she consented to see him the next morning.

The consequence of this interview was a full forgiveness of what was past on the side of Aristella; and on that of Mutantius, a solemn vow of making her his wife the moment she consented to be so: but added, that there were some circumstances in his affairs which required their marriage should be kept secret for a time. To this last article she made no direct answer, at present; but the next day, when they met again by appointment, suffered herself to be overcome by his persuasions, and promised that every thing should be as he would have it. It was at last agreed upon between them, that he should return to London in a few days; and that she should follow, as soon as her sister's recovery permitted to take her leave with decency.

Both these lovers were now in a state of perfect contentment, and each of them observed their promise with the utmost punctuality: but what afterwards befel them, must be the subject of another chapter.

CHAP. IX.

CONTAINS ONLY A CONTINUATION OF THE SAME NARRATIVE, BEGUN IN THE FOREGOING CHAPTER, AND WILL NOT BE CONCLUDED IN THIS.

MUTANTIUS being apprized, by a letter from Aristella, of the day she should come to town, went in his own coach to Greenwich to meet her, and conducted her to a very handsome lodging, in one of the best streets near Bloomsbury Square, where he had also provided servants to attend her. She was at first a little scrupulous of putting herself under his protection, till the sacred ceremony had been performed. He perceived the apprehensions she was un-

der, and immediately relieved them, by renewing his protestations that the next morning should make his person as inviolably hers as his heart had been from the first moment he beheld her; and, at the same time, shewed her a ring and licence, which he had already prepared for that purpose. He supped with her that evening; but when it was over, very respectfully retired, to leave her to that repose he judged necessary after the fatigue of the journey.

I come now to that part of the story which I had an opportunity of being both an eye and ear-witness of. I was acquainted with the gentlewoman of the house where Aristella was placed, and happened to call there on some business the very next morning after that young lady had been brought thither. My friend told me, among other discourse, that she had lett her lodgings at a very high rent; but was apprehensive the person they were for was no better than a kept woman. On my asking what ground she had for such a suspicion, she replied, that she had lett them to a gentleman of fortune, called Mutantius, for the use of a lady whom he brought to take possession of them the night before; and that he had hired servants to wait upon her, who knew as little of the lady as she did. She farther added, that the lady was young and pretty; and that she could not help thinking it a little odd such a one should be under the care of so gay a spark as Mutantius.

As I was perfectly acquainted with the character of Mutantius, I was of opinion she was in the right; and advised her to say nothing till she saw farther into the matter, and not lose so beneficial a lodger on a bare conjecture. She approved of what I said, and I took my leave, but not to go home. What she had told me filled me with a curiosity to discover something more of this affair; so went no farther than the first blind alley I found, where I put on my Invisible Belt, and returned again just as Mutantius knocked at the door. I entered with him, and followed him up stairs. The sight of Aristella convinced me that the good woman had not been mistaken in the description she gave me of her. The lovers ran into each other's arms; and Mutantius, looking on her with the greatest tenderness, spoke thus—
Mutantius. Now, my dearest Aristella,

stella, I am come to put a final end to all your doubts either of my love or honour.

Aristella. I am pleased to think that the perfect confidence I have shewn in both gives me some sort of claim to the proof you are now about to give of them, since I must confess myself in every other respect so unworthy of you.

Mutantius. You are worthy of every thing. But, my dear, you forget that there is another testimony that I expect from you of the regard you have for me.

Aristella. Name it; that my ready compliance may convince you how happy I think myself in every opportunity of obliging you.

Mutantius. It is that you will be content that for some time our marriage may be kept a secret.

Aristella. You know I have promised it.

Mutantius. Yes, in general terms; but you have sisters, who are very dear to you; and though I doubt not of their discretion, I cannot think a secret safe when trusted in so many hands. Will then your love for me enable you to endure their reproaches for your supposed dishonour, rather than reveal what is inconvenient for me to be made known?

Aristella. The trial is a little severe, but will not last for ever.

Mutantius. No, my dear. A time will come when your innocence shall be fully cleared, and, like the sun, shine brighter after this short eclipse; till then, may I depend that the name of wife and husband shall be known only between ourselves?

Aristella. You may.

Mutantius. Swear it, then.

Aristella. By all that's sacred.

Mutantius. Hold, my dear: I would have you first understand the full extent of the vow you are about to make. You swear that no imaginary provocation on my side, nor no unjust contempt nor ill treatment you may meet with from the world, shall ever extort from you a confession that you are my wife, till I myself shall publicly acknowledge you to be so.

Aristella. All this I solemnly swear; and invoke Heaven to bless me as I shall religiously observe it.

Mutantius. Charming, generous creature!—And, in return, to prevent all future apprehensions in prejudice of my faith

or constancy from rising in your breast, if it were possible for me to take a base advantage of the obligation I have laid you under, and make my addresses to another woman on the score of marriage, I here release you from your vow, and leave you at liberty to declare yourself my wife, assert your prior right, and proclaim me for a villain.

Aristella. Heaven forbid it should ever come to that!

Mutantius. No, my *Aristella*; there is no danger. I have already rejected greater offers than ever will be made to me again. To deal sincerely with you, there has been always in my nature an extreme repugnancy to the name of marriage; the name of husband was irksome to me: no woman but yourself had ever charms to reconcile me to it; but your beauty, sweetness, and unaffected modesty, have now informed my soul, and, by degrees, will make me as proud of Hymen's fetters as I should once have been ashamed of them.

Aristella. It shall be my whole study to make them easy to you.

Mutantius. I know it will. But, come, my love, a coach waits to carry us to church; that solemn scene which fixes the everlasting happiness or misery of all who approach it in the manner we do.

On concluding these words, he took her by the hand, and led her down stairs. I was close behind them when they went into the coach, which was ordered to drive to Clerkenwell. I presently supposed he made choice of this place as there was the least danger of his being seen by any one who knew him. I followed on foot; but came time enough to see *Mutantius* resign that liberty he had once set so high a value on as to resolve never to part with. The ceremony was performed by the curate of the parish; and the clerk officiated as father, to give away the bride. After all was over, *Mutantius* desired their marriage might be registered, and a certificate of it given to *Aristella*; both which were accordingly done.

I now left the new-wedded pair to dispose of themselves as they thought fit, and returned to my apartment, in order to ruminate at leisure on an adventure which seemed to me to have in it many inconsistencies. But the more I thought on this adventure, the more I was confounded; and the result of all my meditations

tations was, that it must be left to time to unravel the mystery: I kept, however, a watchful eye on the behaviour of Mutantius, but was little the wiser for the pains I took, as I found he only lived in the same gay and gallant manner he had always done in respect to the ladies.

But now, methinks, I hear the reader cry out with some impatience—'How did Aristella behave all this time? How could she, the wife of this instant man, support the share that others had in his affections?' It is, indeed, impossible for me to say in what manner she would have resented so provoking a circumstance, if known to her; but she lived too retired for it to reach her ears: she had, however, other troubles more than sufficient for human fortitude to sustain; but of what nature, must be left to the next chapter to explain.

CHAP. X.

THE CATASTROPHE OF THIS ADVENTURE CANNOT FAIL OF EXCITING COMPASSION IN THE BREASTS OF MY FAIR READERS, AND ALSO AFFORD MATTER OF SPECULATION TO THE OTHER SEX.

THE pursuit of other adventures, which shall be inserted in their proper places before the conclusion of this work, hindered me for a long time from going to see in what manner Aristella was treated by Mutantius; but at length, some uneasy reflections on her account raised an impatience in me to know the certainty of her present state. Accordingly I went one day to the house where she was lodged; but, to my great surprise, found she had made but a short stay there, and had been removed a considerable time before my coming. On my asking some questions of my friend concerning the reason of it, the good woman answered me in these or the like terms—'The affair was just as I expected,' said she. 'I pity the poor young gentlewoman, indeed; she has not the looks of such a one; but I suppose she has been decoyed by abundance of fair promises: I wonder, however, that Mutantius, knowing the character of my house, and that I always had people of the best fashion lodge

with me, should offer to bring a kept-mistress under my roof; but I was very free with him, and told him my mind plainly on the occasion.'

'And pray what answer did he make,' cried I, with some impatience, 'when you called her a kept-mistress?'—'Very little to the purpose, truly,' resumed she; 'he only said that she was a gentlewoman, and a friend of his, and, as such, expected that I should treat her civilly. I told him, it was not in my nature to treat any body uncivilly, but that I would encourage no such doings; and therefore desired he would provide another lodging for her. On this, he flew into a passion, told me I was an ignorant, foolish woman, and the like; but I did not regard his bouncing; and, as he found I was resolute, took his Madam away in a few days afterwards.'

The manner in which this woman spoke, made me extremely commiserate the condition of Aristella, who, though a lawful wife, was obliged, through the caprice of Mutantius, and the vow she had taken, to endure all the contumely due to a prostitute. I would have given almost any thing but the secret of my Invisible Belt and Tablets to have cleared Aristella's innocence in the fullest manner to this gentlewoman; but as there was no doing one without the other, I was compelled to content myself with getting out of her directions to the place where this much injured lady was removed, resolving to take the first opportunity to see what atonement the behaviour of Mutantius made to her in private, for the injustice he did her reputation in publick.

I was so lucky as to find them together the first day I went; but the scene I was witness of, instead of diminishing, very much added to the concern I had carried with me. Aristella was sitting very melancholy in one corner of the room, Mutantius in another, with all the marks of discontent and ill-humour in his countenance. By what followed, it appears that she had been speaking somewhat to him in relation to the discovery of their marriage. I doubt not, by what I saw of her behaviour, both before and afterwards, that she expressed herself in very gentle terms on the occasion; but the bare mention of such a thing to a man of his present way of thinking, was of itself a sufficient offence. I have al-

T ready

ready described the posture I found him in; but, just as I entered the room, he replied to what she had said, and that reply drew on a conversation which let me into the whole of both their sentiments.

Mutantius. I am sorry to find you have so little regard for me, and indeed so little prudence, as, whenever I am with you, to fall eternally upon a subject which you know is disagreeable to me.

Aristella. If you loved me half so well as you once pretended, it would not be so disagreeable; and you would, at least, acquaint me with the reasons which oblige me to live in the manner I do.

Mutantius. Perhaps it is not proper for me to reveal them.

Aristella. Oh, *Mutantius*! I know not what to think of my condition. Why did you marry me?

Mutantius. Because I then liked you better than any other woman, and if I do not still continue to do so, it is your own fault. I hate to be teased; besides, the conditions of our marriage were that it should be kept a secret.

Aristella. Yes, for a time.

Mutantius. That time will not be shortened by your impatience.

Aristella. It may, for if it lasts much longer my heart must infallibly break.

Mutantius. Pish! women's hearts are not made of such brittle stuff; the head is in more danger, when swelled with pride and vanity.

Aristella. Indeed, Sir, I think it would at least become you to be a little more serious on the occasion.

Mutantius. With all my heart, Madam, as serious as you please; for 'faith I am not in a humour to be merry. Seriously, then, you seem to me to be one of the most ungrateful and most unreasonable women under the sun. Have I not taken you from a dependance on your sisters? Have you not now good lodgings, servants to wait on you, and an allowance sufficient to support you in a fashion beyond what you could ever have expected? yet all this is nothing in your account.

Aristella. Nothing, when balanced against a life of infamy: the very servants you upbraid me with, despise me while they serve me; the people of the house treat me but with an enforced civility; I pass my days as one who was an alien to the world, and had no business in it; never partake the joys of social conversation, never visit, nor am

visited, and scarce dare venture to breathe the open air, lest I should be seen by any who have known me, especially by my sisters, who, mean as you think of them, know how to set a just value upon reputation, and to scorn all riches without it.

Mutantius. A very fine catalogue of complaints, truly! Have you any more?

Aristella. Yes, one thing more, which, with what indifference soever you may now regard me, ought not, methinks, to escape your consideration. You know I am far advanced in my pregnancy; perhaps, too, of a son; and can you support the thoughts, that an infant, born the lawful heir of your estate and name, shall be saluted, on his first seeing the light, with the odious title of bastard?

Mutantius. What will he be the worse, unless you expect to have so wise a child as to know what is said of him as soon as he comes into the world?

Aristella. Oh, *Mutantius*! *Mutantius*! this is cruel dealing.

She said no more, but wept bitterly. *Mutantius*, who, it must be owned, has some good-nature, seemed much moved at seeing her thus; and having looked on her some moments with a great deal of tenderness, bid her come to him; she obeyed, but advanced with the most sorrowful and dejected air; he pulled her to him, made her sit upon his knee, and kissing away the tears, he spoke thus—

Mutantius. Come, my poor *Aristella*, do not be so foolish; you have no cause for weeping; you know yourself virtuous, and I know you are so, and have no need to be afflicted at the mistaken opinion others may have of you, especially as it is not to last always.

Aristella. If I were certain when this event would happen, even though it were much longer than I hope it will, I should wait with patience.

Mutantius. You must depend for that upon my love and honour; it is not in my power to assign the day and hour. To deal sincerely with you, I have been a railer at marriage, have refused offers of that nature as much above my expectations as I was above yours, and I cannot all at once submit to be pointed at for a husband, and hear people laugh and cry out, that I had thrown myself away; but of this, my dear, you may assure yourself, that I will endeavour to get rid of these scruples as soon as possible. In the mean time, I will give you as much of my company as can be spared

As she was circumstanced, it was not in her power to have acted otherwise: yet what satisfaction could such a letter give the two sisters? for a girl to banish herself from her kindred, without acquainting them with the motive, or the place to which she was retired, had a right to raise in them conjectures of the worst sort. They were distracted at the thoughts of her supposed ruin, and spared no pains to find her out, in order to bring her home, and snatch her from the shame they imagined she was involved in.

Whether it were this sudden rush of joy, on hearing him speak these words, that

that was too powerful for her weakness to sustain, or that the lamp of life was wasted by the agonies she had before endured, is altogether uncertain; but she expired that moment, yielding up her last breath on the bosom of her too late repenting husband. Love, pity, and remorse, now engrossed all his faculties; he kept his promise, acknowledged her for his wife, had her intombed with great funeral pomp in his own family vault, and paid all imaginable honours to her memory. Whether he will ever relapse into his former vanities, time alone must shew; but at present, this once gay, thoughtless rover, either is, or affects to

be, lost to the joys he lately was so fond of; behaves with the utmost indifference towards the fair sex; seldom goes to any publick place; seeks but little company at home; and seems to be in every thing the very reverse of what he was.

As to the sisters of the unfortunate Aristella, they were seized with the most deep affliction, when they came to know the sad effects their rash resentment had occasioned—which may serve as a warning to all persons not to be over hasty in censuring actions, the true meaning of which they cannot immediately comprehend.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.



THE INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK VI.

CHAP. I.

IS DEDICATED ENTIRELY TO THE LADIES, AS IT RELATES AN ADVENTURE WHICH NEARLY CONCERNSTHEM TO TAKE NOTICE OF.



AMONG all the numerous modes which the wantonness of luxury has of late years introduced into this kingdom for destroying of time, I know of none more fatal to the virtue and reputation of the female sex than masquerades; I mean, as that amusement is at present conducted. Indeed, when a select company of ladies and gentlemen agree among themselves, or are invited by some person of condition, to divert each other in such disguises as their several fancies shall make choice of, the case is widely different; for there, after passing a few hours in musick, dancing, and pleasant raillery, according to the characters they assume, the masks are all thrown aside, and every one appears as he is; so that none will venture to talk or act beneath a vizard, in such a manner as, when he stands revealed, will either reflect shame on himself, or give offence to those he has been entertain-

ing. Masquerades, thus managed, I cannot but allow to be not only innocent but laudable amusements, as they serve to whet the wit and exhilarate the mind.

But here, sorry am I to say it, the masquerade houses may with propriety enough be called shops, where opportunities for immorality, prophaneness, obscenity, and almost every kind of vice, are retailed to any one who will become a customer; and at the low rate of seven and twenty shillings, the most abandoned courtesan, the most profligate rake, or common sharper, purchases the privilege of mingling with the first peers and peeresses of the realm, and not seldom affronts both modesty and greatness with impunity. I perceive, to my great satisfaction, there are some ladies who, touched with a just sense of what is owing to their dignity, are determined not to expose themselves any more in a place where, if no worse ensues, the most licentious freedoms of speech, at least, are often offered to the chastest ears; and I am not without hope, that the influence of their example will prevail on many others to do the same. For the benefit, however, of the unwary, and those who, by their small acquaintance in town, are ignorant of the customs of these dangerous amusements, it will not be amiss to relate

relate an adventure which I was witness of, and may serve as a warning to all who are truly innocent, and desire to remain so.

Alexis and Matilda were the son and daughter of two gentlemen who lived near Newcastle. They had loved each other even before either well knew what was meant by the passion; and, as their understanding ripened, their inclinations increased. Hope, for some time, gilded the prospect of their mutual wishes; but, when they least expected, a stop was put to the consummation by an unfortunate disagreement between their parents. Alexis was forbid to see Matilda, and Matilda ever to think on Alexis: but these commands had little authority over hearts so fondly enamoured as theirs; they formed the most romantick contrivances to keep alive the flame with which each had inspired the other; some of which succeeded so well, as to enable them to continue an intercourse by letters, and even to gain private interviews. It was the father of Alexis who of the two had been most refractory; and he dying a small time after, the young gentleman found means to reconcile matters so effectually with the parents of Matilda, that they at length consented to give her to him, and completed the happiness of the equally loving and beloved pair.

Matilda, whose every care, hope, and joy, had all been centered in her dear Alexis, had nothing now to wish beyond what she was in possession of; and Alexis thought himself so blest, that he even defied the power of Fortune to give him any cause of disquiet. Fatal security! How little dependance for the future is there on the present good! They had not long enjoyed the sweets of this so-much-desired union, before Matilda, who had never been in London, expressed a curiosity to see it. Alexis, proud to embrace every opportunity of giving her pleasure, immediately took the hint, and told her he was ready to conduct her there as soon as she pleased. Accordingly they set out, and arrived in London about September. Alexis took ready-furnished lodgings, in a handsome house near St. James's, for six months; in which time he thought he should be able to shew Matilda every thing worth her seeing in town.

Alexis had received his first precepts at Westminster School; and having no

relations in London, his father requested me, by letters, to call sometimes at the house where he boarded, and have an eye over his behaviour. I did so; and the advice I gave him being delivered not in a magisterial but friendly manner, the lad conceived a very great affection for me from that time, and has preserved it ever since. He made me the compliment of a first visit on his coming to town, told me how happy he was, and begged I would be no stranger to the fair person who had made him so. I accepted the invitation, and went the next day. On his presenting Matilda to me, I was struck with admiration; for, besides every thing that could constitute a perfect beauty, there was a sweet simplicity, and a chearful, unaffected innocence, which shone through the whole, and brightened every grace.

As the sole excitement Matilda had to take a journey to London was to gratify her curiosity with the sight of it, there was no eminent structure, or place of note, to which she was not conducted by her Alexis. A new scene of diversions opened as the winter season came on; plays, operas, and masquerades, now began to attract attention: the two first of these amusements Matilda was not altogether a stranger to, having often seen somewhat like them acted by strolling companies in the country, but she had not the least notion of masquerades; and the little account Alexis was able to give her making her more impatient to know what sort of entertainment they afforded, it may be easily supposed that so indulgent an husband would not suffer her to continue long in suspense; it may be, too, that he had some curiosity of his own to gratify in this point, having, it seems, never been at a masquerade himself.

Tickets accordingly were purchased, and habits hired. I happened to make a morning visit the day they were to go, and found Matilda busy in ornamenting a little hat and crook. The moment I entered the room, she told me, with the greatest pleasure in her countenance, that she was to be at the masquerade that night, and was to assume the character of a shepherdess. I replied, she could not take upon her one more suitable to her youth and innocence.

I said nothing to them of my design; but, when evening came, I equipped myself

myself with a domino, and hastened to that Babel of hurry and confusion; where it was no difficult matter to discover the persons I sought after, as I knew the dresses they were in. I soon distinguished the shepherdess, and the husband by the blue domino. I had seen lying on a table in his dining-room, and perceived there were many eyes upon Matilda; for, though her face was concealed, her shape and air had somewhat in them sufficiently attractive. But there was one who, above all the rest, seemed particularly attentive to her motions: he was in the habit of a huntsman; a character which I afterwards had reason to say to myself suited very well with the intentions he had in his head that night. Which way soever Matilda turned, he took care not to lose sight of her; but, as she kept close to Alexis, neither he nor any one else had an opportunity of speaking to her. I hovered as near them as I could without being taken notice of; and it gave me a good deal of diversion, to see the surprise this innocent country lady testified at hearing the freedoms with which some people, who seemed to be perfect strangers, accosted each other.

A gentleman crossing the room with his mask in his hand, was known to Alexis; who, on sight of him, cried out to Matilda—'Look yonder, my dear! there is Mr. Freeman! I never heard of his being in town. I will just step and tell him where we lodge: do you sit here till I come back.' He then seated her on a bench, and went hastily after his friend, who had passed into another room. I now doubted not but the huntsman would snatch his opportunity of entertaining Matilda; but I lost sight of him in an instant; he vanished, as it were, from the place, and I saw him no more. The fair shepherdess, however, was not to remain neglected. I found several advancing towards her; one of whom was the most grotesque, as well as disagreeable figure, I ever beheld: his stature was far from what could be called tall, but the circumference of his carcase exceeded that of any three men in the whole assembly; his legs looked like the pillars of a church-porch, and when he moved were at such a distance from each other, that a boar of a moderate size might easily pass between them without being incommoded. He had on the habit of a Turkish ba-

shaw; which was the worst, indeed, he could have chose; his huge ears, discovered by the shortness of his turban, hung upon his shoulders, as did the wallets under his chin upon his breast: in a word, he could have no deformity that the dress he was in did not shew to advantage.

This enormous creature had no sooner reached the place where Matilda sat, than he threw himself down by her on the bench, and accosted her with language which I should never forgive myself, nor expect to be forgiven by my reader, to repeat; but I was glad to find, by the whispers of some people behind me, that, instead of a gentleman, as I at first took him for, he was no other than a bully at a noted brothel in Covent-Garden, and was known about town by the name of Lumper Hammock. I cannot pretend to say whether this fellow was encouraged by any other person to behave to Matilda in the manner he did merely to put her spirits into a hurry, or whether he was instigated to it only by his own impudence and brutality: but, whatever it might be, the situation of that poor lady was greatly to be pitied; she moved by little and little as far from him as the bench would give her leave; but he still followed, and would needs keep close to her, and persecute her with his ribaldry. Sometimes she got up, and looked round to see for her husband; then sat down again, not daring to leave the place for fear of missing him; but all the time shewed tokens of the utmost agitation of mind.

At length the blue domino appeared; on which she started from her seat, and running to him, cried—'Oh, my dear, I am glad you are come!' He only replied, in a low voice—'Aye, aye, let us be gone!' and, taking her by the hand, led her hastily away. I pleased myself with the thoughts of having seen Matilda safe under the protection of her husband, and was equally so that he had discovered little approbation of the masquerade, by his leaving it at a time when the diversion was at it's height, and more company coming in than going out.

But the satisfaction I enjoyed in both these points, vanished in a moment. Alexis returned; his mask was now off, and he passed directly to the place where he had left Matilda; then started back. Confusion and surprize overspread his faces.

face; he threw his eyes wildly round the room, then ran through every part of it; and, without considering how much he exposed himself to the ridicule of that giggling assembly, asked first of one, and then of another, if they had seen a shepherdess in green and silver, and if they knew what was become of her. This struck me with infinite concern, as it made me know Matilda had been deceived by the sight of the blue domino; and, in spite of my unwillingness to let him see I had come to a place where I had refused to accompany him, was just stepping forward to inform him of what had happened, when a lady, hearing his enquiries, said—'Sir, the lady I saw with you, in the dress you mention, went away a little while ago with a gentleman in a blue domino, much the same as your own.' On which he cried out—'Oh Heavens! what cursed mistake is this!'

In uttering this exclamation, he flew out of the room like lightning, without staying to thank the lady for her intelligence. I followed as fast as I could, and found him at the door of the house, encompassed with hackney-coachmen, chairmen, and link-boys; among whom he was vainly endeavouring to get some account of his lost shepherdess. One of them, it seems, had said he saw a lady, in the habit he described, go into a coach with a gentleman, but could tell nothing either of the figure of the coach, or where it was ordered to drive. Finding no information could be gained in the place where he was, he withdrew from the crowd, as I suppose to consider what method he should pursue; for he continued in a fixed posture for two or three minutes, leaning against some rails before an adjacent house. My heart bled for him; and if I had been capable of offering him either advice or consolation, would not have kept at the distance I did: but the accident that had happened was without a remedy; and I had often observed, that to preach up moderation in the first gusts of passion serves but to inflame it more.

I thought there were no measures he could take that night; yet imagining he had something in his head, was desirous of seeing what event his cogitations would produce: I therefore laid hold of the opportunity I now had of stepping behind the cover of a hackney-coach in waiting, and girded on my Belt of Invisibility, which I always carried in my

pocket, in case any thing should fall in my way to give me occasion to make use of it. The influence of my valuable gift had but just taken effect, by being warm upon my body, when Alexis roused himself out of his reverie, and walked very fast up the street. I kept pace with him till he came to the house where he lodged. The door being opened by his own footman, who sat up for him—'Is my wife come home?' cried he. The fellow answered in the negative; and seeming somewhat surprized at this question, he threw himself into the parlour, saying to himself—'How mad a hope did I entertain that she might have found some means to escape the hands of her ravisher, and been here before me!—No, no, 'tis impossible! the villain doubtless will secure his prey. Cursed, cursed masquerade! invented by the fiends for the destruction of virtue!'

While he was thus speaking, he tore off his domino with agonies not to be expressed, and stamped it under his feet; then turning to his servant, went on thus—

Alexis. William, your mistress is run away with; stolen from me by some villain in a domino like my own: she is lost for ever unless immediately recovered. Fly, this minute, to every tavern and bagnio you can think of; describe her habit; enquire if such a one, with a person in a blue domino, entered there. Be gone this instant! while I run to a justice of peace, and get a warrant to search in all suspected places.

William. What part of the town, Sir, do you think it most likely I shall hear of her?

Alexis. Alas! I am as ignorant of that as you: but all parts must be searched. Fly, then, good William!—and, do you hear, ask every hackney-coachman you meet with if he set any such persons down, and where? Away, I say!—stay not to consider!—a moment may confirm her ruin and my dishonour!

The fellow obeyed without making any farther reply; but I perceived, by his countenance, was not very well contented with the errand he was sent upon; and Alexis went out of the house at the same time he did, in order to have recourse to a magistrate in this exigence, as he said he would. I had no inclination to follow either master or man on an expedition

tion which promised so little success; therefore made all the haste I could to my own apartment, very much fatigued in body, yet much more so in mind, at the unfortunate mistake poor Matilda had fallen into, and which I had all the reason in the world to fear would be attended with the most dreadful consequences.

CHAP. II.

CONTAINS THE CONCLUSION OF A NARRATIVE, WHICH I AM CERTAIN THERE IS ONE PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO CANNOT READ WITHOUT BEING FILLED WITH THE MOST POIGNANT REMORSE, UNLESS HE IS AS DEAD TO ALL SENSE OF HUMANITY AS OF HONOUR.

MY impatience to know if Matilda was yet come home, or if the researches of Alexis had gained him any information concerning her, made me resolve to go to his lodgings in the morning; but whether I should make this visit in my Visible or Invisible capacity, I was for some time at a loss: at last, it seemed most eligible to appear in *propria persona*, as if I came only to ask some questions concerning the masquerade, and how they approved of that diversion, as it was the first time they partook of it; and also to take no notice of my being apprized of any thing that had happened there, unless he related it to me himself, which I did not much doubt of his doing. Accordingly I went; and, upon my entering into the dining-room, Alexis ran to me, and began the recital of his misfortune in this pathetick exclamation—'Oh, my friend, I am undone and ruined for ever! The author, giver, and partaker, of all my happiness, is lost! torn from me by some lascivious, some inhuman villain! and him whom yesterday you beheld the most blest of men, you now see the most accursed and most wretched of all created beings!'

He then proceeded to inform me, as well as the distraction of his thoughts would give him leave, of the method he had taken for the recovery of his lost treasure; how he had passed the whole night and that morning in search of her,

and that all his enquiries had been fruitless.

I then advised him to put an advertisement in the papers, describing the shape and stature of Matilda, with all the particulars of her dress, and offering a handsome reward to any one who should give information of the place at which she alighted out of a hackney-coach, in company with a gentleman in a blue domino, between the hours of twelve and one. 'This you may do,' said I, 'without mentioning any name, except that of the person to whom such intelligence may be brought; and it is very likely either the coachman who carried her, or some one who might be about the door where she was set down, or even the servants of the house, will, for the sake of the gratuity, make that discovery which all your personal enquiries might not be able to obtain.'

I had no sooner ended, than a sudden dawn of cheerfulness gleamed upon his languid face; and, to shew how much he approved of the thought, took pen and paper, and immediately wrote in almost the same terms I had expressed it; specifying, at the same time, a coffee-house where the reward should be paid, on the requested intelligence being brought. After this, Nature, who will not be denied her rites, whatever vexations may intervene to rob her of them, spread a certain drowsiness upon his eye-lids, which I perceiving, persuaded him to favour; and, on my promising to come again the same evening, he lay down on the bed, and left me at liberty to pursue my inclinations.

As I had now no engagement upon my hands, and had not been at White's for a considerable time, it was now my full design to go thither, imagining it might not be improbable but I might hear something of Matilda; but as I had some very good reasons not to appear in that place, I stepped into the first nook I found in my way, and put on my Belt of Invisibility. I was but just equipped, and passing on to my intended rout, when I saw a chair, with the curtains close drawn, stop at a few paces before me. I should have taken no notice of this, if one of the fellows had not lifted up the top, and told the person in it that he had forgot whether it were the Red or the Green Lamps. The

answer

answer was given in a voice which I presently knew to be Matilda's; and, if I had not so well remembered, as I did, the accents, I should have suspected it was no other than herself, by her saying—*'The Two Green Lamps.'*

On finding it was she, the reader will easily believe I had more curiosity to see the interview between her and Alexis than any thing else I could have in my head. I followed the chair till it came to the house, and on the door being opened, slipped in with it. On her alighting, Mrs. Soberton, who was mistress of the house, ran out of the parlour, and was beginning to testify her joy at her return, though mingled with some demonstrations of surprize, to see her in the condition she was, which, indeed, was deplorable enough; her head without any other covering than a handkerchief carelessly tied over her dishevelled hair, her garments torn, her eyes swelled with tears, every feature distorted, and all the tokens of distraction and despair about her. She made no answer to what the good gentlewoman said; but, after throwing some money to the chairmen, ran hastily up into the dining-room, where, flinging herself on a settee, she cried out—*'Where is Alexis!'* To which Mrs. Soberton, who had followed as well as myself, replied—*'Oh, Madam, you cannot imagine what trouble both he and all of us have had on your account!'*

I know not whether that unhappy lady would have declared to Mrs. Soberton any part of what had befallen her or not; for Alexis, who either had not fallen asleep, or was easily awaked, heard his wife's voice, and came flying out of the chamber that instant. Mrs. Soberton, discreetly judging that they might not chuse to have a third person witness of their discourse, went directly down stairs; but the Invisible remained, and his wonderful Tablets received the impression of the following dialogue between them:

Matilda. Oh, Alexis, why did you leave me?

Alexis. Why did you leave the place where I desired you to wait for my return?

Matilda. I stirred not from it but to follow you, as I then thought.

Alexis. Confusion! How could you be so mistaken?

Matilda. Alas, I had no apprehension

of the deception put upon me! His habit was exactly like yours; his stature the same; he spoke in a low voice; but if he had not, my spirits were in too much agitation at the impudence of a fellow who had but just before accosted me, to have distinguished the difference.

Alexis. Oh, my torn heart! But say, Who is the villain that betrayed you! Where were you carried!

Matilda. Alas, the precautions he took have left me ignorant of both; and all I know is, that I am undone!

Alexis. Distraction!—Undone, and not know by whom! nor even in what place! all means for my revenge barred up! Yet, perhaps, I may be able to discover something—Tell me in an instant all the particulars of the story!

Matilda. I will, though every word will stab me to the soul, and inflict anew the shocks I have undergone.

Alexis. No preparations; be quick, and answer my demand at once.

Matilda. Have patience, then; for while you look so terrible I cannot speak.

Alexis. You cannot think I would hurt you; speak then, and break at once the heart of thy wretched husband!

Matilda. Oh, which way shall I begin?—how end?

Alexis. Keep me not on the rack!

Matilda. Soon as I saw the counterfeit Alexis approach, I rose to meet him; and on his bidding me to come, and stretching forth his hand, I gave him mine, glad to find myself conducted from that mingled crowd, which I had seen too much of to desire to continue any longer with. We went into a coach, where I began to tell him how I had been affronted by an ugly huge man in a Turkish habit; but he made no answer either to that or any other idle prate I entertained him with, till the coach stopped, and he handed me into a house, the entry of which was full of men, who were running backwards and forwards with candles in their hands, and seemed very busy. I asked where we were going; he still made no reply; but after a short whisper to one of the fellows, led me up stairs.

Alexis. 'Sdeath! why did you go? Then was your time to have cried out for rescue!

Matilda. What, from my husband! I could not as yet know him from any other than yourself. I was, indeed, a little surprized at this behaviour; but imagined

imagined it was owing to some little whim you had taken into your head, on purpose to laugh at my simplicity. Being warm with having my mask on so long, I plucked it off as soon as we got into the room, but he clapped it on again, a man being then just entering with a bottle and glasses in his hand, which having set down on a table, he immediately withdrew. My conductor then bolted the door, and running towards me, said—'Now, my angel, I may feast my eye with all that heaven of beauty, which, while beneath a cloud, attracted my admiration; and you behold the man who from this happy moment devotes himself entirely to your charms.' With these words, he took off both mine and his own vizard. I shrieked, and surely had fainted with the fright, if an equal proportion of rage had not kept up my spirits.

Alexis. What said he then?

Matilda. A thousand romantick lyes, such as I have read in plays and novels, which I answered only with revilings; till perceiving my just scorn had no effect upon him, I had recourse to tears and entreaties; told him I was a married woman, that I had a husband dearer to me than my soul, and by whom I was as much beloved, and conjured him not to detain me.

Alexis. Did not this move him?

Matilda. Oh no, not in the least; the audacious wretch but laughed at this remonstrance, said that I was a fool, and knew not the true interest of my sex, but that he would instruct me better, and make me happy, though against my will.

Alexis. Execrable dog! But go on.

Matilda. You may easily believe, that he who could speak such words, would also accompany them with actions of the same nature. I resisted all I could the indecent liberties he took, called heaven and earth to my assistance, but in vain; I was at last overpowered. In the midst of tears, reproaches, swoonings, he effected his brutal purpose, and made me the most miserable of women!

Alexis. Most miserable, indeed! After this, I suppose, he would have suffered you to depart?

Matilda. Can you think me vile enough to continue one moment in the presence of that detested monster, when I was at liberty to leave him? This, indeed, is cruel. Oh, Alexis! I hate my-

self for what I have been compelled to suffer; do not you hate me too?

Alexis. Oh, 'tis too much for man to bear! Yet one thing more, Matilda; describe, as near as possible, the features and complexion of this inhuman ravisher.

Matilda. Alas, the horror I was in from the first moment I found myself in the power of a stranger, hindered me from taking any great notice. All I can say is, that he had dark eyes, a clear and ruddy skin; and though his behaviour rendered him odious to me, with others, I believe, he may pass for handsome.

Alexis. Young, I suppose?

Matilda. About five or six and twenty, as far as I can judge.

Alexis. Had he the appearance of a man of rank and fortune?

Matilda. Every thing I saw about him, which properly belonged to himself, bespoke him such; but doubly disguised. Did you not take notice of an huntsman at the masquerade?

Alexis. Yes, and remember he always kept near us. Was he the ravisher?

Matilda. The same. He told me he had his eye upon me from the first moment I came in, and when he saw you left me, ran and procured a domino as like yours as he could get, in hopes I might be, as, alas! I really was, deceived by that fatal habit.

Alexis. 'Tis well; I may perhaps hunt him.

The eyes of Alexis seemed to flash fire while he uttered these words: after which he stood musing for some time; then turning to his wife, who still sat weeping in the same posture she had thrown herself into at her entrance, spoke thus to her—

Alexis. Rise, Matilda, retire to your chamber, and endeavour to compose yourself to rest.

Matilda. What, so early? 'Tis not yet six o'clock.

Alexis. No matter, your condition requires it; you have wak'd too long, therefore pray go.

Matilda. Will you come too?

Alexis. Do not expect me, I have much to think upon, and must be alone; there is a fermentation in my mind which must have time to settle; to-morrow I may be at more ease; I pray you then to give me liberty this night.

With this, she took a candle and withdrew; but with a look and gesture so truly pity-moing, that if a painter had been to draw the picture of Despair, he could not have copied from an original more striking.

He then called for Mrs. Soberton, told her his wife had been very much frightened, and was indisposed; so begged she would assist her in any thing she might stand in need of. She made no reply, but went out of the room, I suppose, to do what he requested of her. I was about to follow her, but seeing Alexis put on his wig, which he had plucked off when he went to lie down, thought he was going on some expedition which it might be worth my taking the pains to explore. To this end I slipped down stairs while he was taking up his sword and hat, got out of the house before him, divested myself of my Belt, became visible, and met him some few paces distant. I told him I was returning to his lodgings according to my promise, and affected some surprise at seeing him abroad: he seemed pleased that he had not missed me, and repeated in a few words the sum of what I have been relating; adding, that he now flattered himself with being able to trace out the person who had injured him, by the description Matilda had given of him; and then intreated I would be so good as to accompany him in the search he was about to make; to which request I readily consented.

I found his scheme was, to enquire among those people who let out dresses for the masquerade, if any account could be given of a gentleman who the night before had hired, first the habit of a huntsman, and afterwards a blue domino. The thing, indeed, seemed feasible enough in itself, though it did not answer expectation. We went to several shops without receiving the least information; and all we could learn was, that a gentleman, habited like a huntsman, had come in a very great hurry for a blue domino, which had not been returned till about half an hour before our coming; but the name or quality of the person who hired it, the woman protested she knew nothing of. Alexis then demanded, somewhat hastily, who it was had brought it back: she smiled both at this interrogatory, and the manner in which it was made; and replied, that she was talking to customers at that time in the shop; but if she had been less engaged, she

should scarce have taken any notice—
‘For,’ said she, ‘provided we have our goods again, and are paid for the use of them, it is not our business to ex-
‘mine farther.’

Here ended the fruitless search of Alexis. He had now no shadow of hope for discovering the ravisher, but in the advertisement I had persuaded him to get inserted in the news-papers; and his despair became so outrageous, that it was with much difficulty I prevailed on him to go home. I went with him, fearing, if he was left alone in the street, he might be guilty of some extravagancy. It was one of the most fine frosty nights I had ever seen; and, while we were knocking at the door, he looked up towards the sky, and, with a voice denoting the extremest bitterness of heart, burst into this exclamation—‘How many thousand twinkling stars are there, yet not one among them all a friend to me, or poor undone Matilda!’

I went home with him, but privately gave William a caution not to go to sleep, but keep near his master, and be attentive to all his motions, in order to prevent any fatal effect of the present distraction of his mind. I then went home, but with an anxiety for this truly worthy, though ill-fated pair, that made me quit my bed very early next morning, with a resolution to exert my utmost endeavours for the mitigation of their sorrows, and, if possible, to reconcile Alexis to a misfortune which was without a remedy; but, unluckily for my design, a person came to speak with me about some business which detained me till almost twelve o’clock.

On my arrival at the place where I so much wished to be, I found Alexis just come in before me. He appeared with a countenance much more composed than the night before, but very pensive and melancholy: he presently acquainted me, however, with the occasion of his having been abroad; it was this—He told me he had passed the whole night in considering how he should act in relation to Matilda; and finding it a thing inconsistent with his honour to suffer her to remain in town after what had happened, he resolved to send her immediately into the country, and was just returned from hiring a post-chaise for that purpose. The reason he gave for his proceeding in this manner, was as follows—‘She cannot remain here, and be shut up, she must

‘ must appear sometimes ; and who can tell but that in some unlucky minute she may be seen by the very villain who has ruined her, and who, either through curiosity, or the desire of renewing the gratification of his vicious flame, may discover whose wife she is, and wherever he sees me, point me to his lewd companions for the wretch he has made me !’

I had nothing to offer in opposition to what he said on this score, for indeed I thought it very proper they should both retire into the country ; so replied, that I was glad I had called that morning, otherwise I should not have had the opportunity of wishing them a good journey : to which he hastily rejoined—‘ I shall not go.’—‘ How !’ cried I, somewhat surprized, ‘ do you send away Matilda, and stay behind yourself !’ A deep sigh was the first answer he gave ; but the testimony of his discontent was presently succeeded by these words—

‘ Yes, my friend, she must go without me : two days ago, nothing was so precious to me as her presence ; I lived, indeed, but in her sight ; every glance, every look she gave me, shot pleasure to my heart ; but now, alas ! those happy moments are fled, and I can regard her as no other than the ruined reliques of the woman once so dear to me !’

It was in vain I represented to him, that as I doubted not but he was perfectly convinced of the purity of Matilda’s mind, he ought not to love her less for the violence her person had sustained : he owned the justness of my reasons, but could not prevail on himself to be governed by them ; and when I urged the cruelty of sending her so long a journey without any companion to alleviate her sorrows, he made me this reply—‘ She does not go alone ; her waiting-maid, who, soon after our arrival in town, was obliged to be removed on account of the small-pox, is now quite recovered, and came home last night : this girl has attended Matilda for some years, and I know will be very careful of her.’

While we were discoursing, the chaise came to the door ; on which Alexis called to have the luggage put in, and his wife to make herself ready. I asked him if he thought it proper I should take my leave of Matilda before her departure ; he replied, that it was a ceremony which he believed she would gladly be

dispensed with from receiving, in her present unhappy situation ; but begged I would stay in the dining-room till he had dispatched this disagreeable affair. With these words he went out of the room, and I remained where I was. In less than half a quarter of an hour, looking through the window, I saw the disconsolate Matilda go out of the house, supported on one side by Alexis, and on the other by her attendant. I could not see her face ; but her motions, and the distracted air with which she threw herself into the chaise, were enough to convince me of the extreme wretchedness of her condition.

Alexis returned to me in a situation little less pity-moving, yet could not my heart altogether absolve him for this last part of his behaviour to Matilda : it was now, however, a time to apply rather balms than corrosives to his bleeding and despairing mind ; I therefore said every thing in my power to administer consolation to him, but all my endeavours that way were unsuccessful ; and though I staid with him the greatest part of the day, had the mortification to leave him as I found him.

Oh ! had the dark unknown beheld the sad effects his wild inordinate desires produced, he surely could not have sustained the shock, but must have revenged upon himself the mischiefs he had brought upon two worthy persons, so lately blessed, so truly loving and beloved !

C H A P. III.

CONSISTS OF SOME FARTHER PARTICULARS RELATIVE TO THE PRECEDING ADVENTURE ; WITH TWO LETTERS WROTE BY THAT UNFORTUNATE LADY TO HER HUSBAND IN HER EXILE.

I Am very much afraid that Alexis will stand but little justified in the opinion of my fair readers for his conduct towards Matilda ; they will doubtless say, that the love he pretended to have for her had taken but a shallow root in his heart, when it could be shaken by a misfortune which she had no way contributed to bring upon herself. They will, perhaps, also add, that after she had with so much simplicity, some may think folly too, revealed to him the whole of what

what had befallen her, it was not only unkind, but highly ungenerous and cruel in him to abandon her to despair, at a time when she had so much need of the tenderest compassion and consolation.

I must confess, indeed, that these accusations have the strongest appearance of reason on their side; yet I must take upon me, notwithstanding, to aver, that how much a paradox soever it may seem to some, Love; when in excess, may, on more occasions than one, produce the same effects as hate. Certain it is, that it was chiefly owing to the too refined delicacy of the passion Alexis was possessed of for Matilda, that made them both so greatly wretched; the thoughts that another, though by force, had revelled in her charms, deprived those charms of all their relish, and sickened every wish. When we have been talking together on this head, often have I heard him, in the utmost bitterness of heart, express himself in these terms—“I still adore her mind; I know it is all composed of sweetness, innocence, and truth; but, oh! the blemish cast upon her person cannot be washed off but with the villain’s blood; and, unless fate allows me the means of doing her and myself that justice, can never look upon her but as the ghost of my once dear wife!”

Finding, that to prevail on him to live with Matilda as a wife, was utterly impracticable, at least till time had a little mellowed the asperity of his resentment, I forbore any farther speech on that head, believing, that if a change in Matilda’s favour should ever happen, it must come wholly of himself, and not by the arguments of another.

It will be easy for the reader to judge of how little efficacy the persuasions of any friend could be to move him, when those of the tender, the endearing, the so lately adored Matilda, proved in vain; which abundantly appear by the many letters she sent to him after her retirement, two only of which I got an opportunity of transcribing; the first was wrote immediately on her arrival at their country seat.

“MY DEAR, DEAR ALEXIS!

“I Am a sufficient proof, that grief is not so fatal as some people would represent it, since I live to tell you I am safely arrived at ***** Yes, I

am returned to that once blissful scene of soft delights, of pure and virtuous love. But, oh! that Heaven is fled, a sad reverse supplies it’s place; and wheresoever I turn my eyes, horrors instead of joys rise to my distracted view! I remember, that when you turned me from you, your last words were—“Be comforted, Matilda.” Alas! you well know, without Alexis there is no comfort for Matilda; your presence is the only balsam can assuage the tortures of my agonizing heart! If then, indeed, you wish me less the wretch I am, let me not linger long in a banishment more cruel than death! Quit that detested town, fly to my relief, and at least join with me in bewailing what is past a remedy.

“But, oh! I have too much cause to fear you have withdrawn all your affection from me, and am doubly miserable in a consciousness of being rendered unworthy to retain it. Yet, had sickness, or any other accident, deprived me of that little beauty nature has bestowed upon me, and made me become lame, or blind, or crooked, I flatter myself you would have loved me still; you would then have pitied and cherished me in your bosom; and sure, the misfortune that has befallen me, was as far removed from my seeking, as any of those I have mentioned. I will not, however, anticipate the doom I so much dread; will not give way to apprehensions distracting to myself, and I hope injurious to you. I know you are generous and just, and will endeavour to assure myself those noble principles, even without the aid of tenderness, will not permit you to hate me, to throw me off for ever, for my person having sustained a violence, to which I am persuaded you are convinced my mind was incapable of consenting. I will believe that you feel all my woes, participate in my anguish, and that my pen ought rather to flow with words of consolation than reproach. Yet, if it is ordained that we must both be wretched, let us be wretched together; let us mingle our tears, and interchangeably echo back each other’s sighs; let us indulge despair; recal the memory of those blissful hours we once enjoyed; compare the present with the past, and join in curses on the base, the inhuman author of our woes!—But whither does my inconsiderate

' considerate passion lead me! Does it
' become the love, the tenderness, the
' duty, of a wife, to wish you should
' partake my ruin? No; since I can
' no longer contribute to your happi-
' ness, rather forget, renounce, aban-
' don me for ever! Yet, oh! 'tis hard!
' —My brain grows wild on the re-
' flection—I can proceed no farther.
' Pity me, my most dear, my most adored
' Alexis! Pity, O pity, the undone,
' the lost,

' MATILDA!

' P. S. If these distracting lines have
' any power to move you, if any
' remains of soft compassion to-
' wards me still dwell within your
' breast, write to me by the first
' post. Fix, I beseech you, my
' uncertain fate. Oh, that I should
' live to stand in need of intreaties
' to hear from you!"

When Alexis shewed me the above, he seemed all dissolved in a flood of love and tenderness; yet I believe the answer he sent to it was dictated in terms not altogether so satisfactory to Matilda as the present disturbance of her mind required. Here follows the second melancholy epistle of that unfortunate lady.

' My for ever dear, tho' unkind ALEXIS,

' **W**ITH what anxiety have I watched
' the arrival of the post! how
' counted the tedious minutes as they
' glided on! how trembled between
' hope and fear on every knock given at
' the gate, while in expectation of a
' letter from you! At last it came;
' but, oh! I am not more at ease!
' Wherefore, Alexis, do you keep me
' in this cruel suspense? I asked no
' impossibilities of you, desired you not
' to love me still; I only begged the de-
' cision of my fate; and, sure, that is
' not a request too much for me to
' make, or you to grant!

' My father, uncles, all my kindred
' and acquaintance, nay, our very ser-
' vants, stand amazed to see me here
' without you; they perceive my altered
' looks; and, with officious love, en-
' quire into the cause. All the answer
' I can make is, that the air of London
' not agreeing with my constitution, I
' hurried back before some business you

' had in town would permit you to re-
' turn. These excuses may pass current
' for a time, but cannot do so long; I
' conjure you, therefore, by all you have
' to hope, or fear, or wish, not to ex-
' pose yourself and me to conjectures
' which cannot be to the advantage of
' either of our characters. Pronounce
' my doom; say that you will return,
' and live with me, in all appearance;
' as before, or scruple not to let me
' know you have resolved on an eternal
' separation; that I may retire, at once,
' to some dark corner of the world, and
' shut myself up from pity and con-
' tempt. I know this ought to have
' been thought upon before you obliged
' me to remove from London; but both
' of us were in too much confusion, at
' the time of parting, to give our cooler
' reason room to operate. We have
' since, however, had leisure to reflect on
' what was proper to be done in our un-
' happy circumstances; and I flatter
' myself you will not think me too pre-
' suming in being the first to mention it.

' O, Alexis! imagine not that, when
' I urge you to this eclaireissement, I
' am so vain as to soothe my fond heart
' with a belief, that since the dreadful
' accident you ever can love me as be-
' fore; no, I rather expect my sentence
' will be that of an everlasting banish-
' ment: perhaps it is already signed
' within your breast, and the compassion
' you have for me alone delays the exe-
' cution. If this should be the case,
' throw aside that cruel mercy which
' conceals it. Grief and despair have
' given me fortitude to bear the worst
' of ills, and sure there can be none
' half so dreadful to me as seeing you
' no more! So much the better for my
' eternal peace, as it will the sooner rid
' me of the burden of a hated life. But
' I will trouble you no more than to re-
' new my petition of knowing, in your
' next letter, what it is you have in ef-
' fect decreed for the innocently cri-
' minal.

' MATILDA.

' P. S. Your old acquaintance and
' fellow collegian, Mr. L—, has
' just now sent to enquire when
' you are expected down. He de-
' signs, it seems, to set up at the next
' general election, for the borough
' of ***** and greatly depends
' on the interest you have in that
' place.

place. I suppose you will shortly receive a letter from himself on the occasion. O may the calls of friendship give weight to those I have mentioned, and influence you to return!

I happened to be with Alexis at the time of his receiving this. He first read it to himself, then communicated it to me; and, when he had finished, cried out, with an extraordinary emotion—'Poor Matilda! unhappy, charming woman! with what enchanting eloquence does she plead against herself! how sweetly labour to oppose what she most wishes to obtain!'

As I found the strongest reason in the arguments urged in Matilda's letter, I must confess that I was at a loss to comprehend what he meant by speaking in this manner; therefore desired he would explain himself, which he immediately did, in these terms—'O friend! the more I discover of her merit, the less I am able to forget the violation of her honour! I must cease to love her as I do, must bring myself to look upon her with the same indifference that most husbands do upon their wives, before I can support, with any tolerable degree of patience, the thoughts that another has possessed her.' Thus did he always talk whenever we were alone; and had Matilda known his sentiments, I believe it would be a moot point whether she would not rather have chose a separation than to live with him, after he had reduced himself to such a state of insensibility.

He now, indeed, began to give great indications that he had nothing more at heart than to lose all remembrance, not only of the injury done to Matilda, but of herself also. By very swift degrees he became the reverse of what he was before his going to that fatal masquerade. The pleasures of the bottle, and the conversation of the looser part of womankind, divide too much of his time between them; and he seeks in riots and debaucheries his relief from melancholy. I am told, however, that he is at present preparing to set out for****; but what satisfaction can the virtuous Matilda receive from his return, thus transformed, thus debased in morals and behaviour, from the man she had so dearly loved, and who was once so worthy her esteem?

How sad a reverse has a few weeks made in the condition of this lately happy pair! Surely the wretch—for so I must call him, be he of what degree or rank soever—who, for the sake of gratifying the fleeting pleasure of a moment, has brought this ruin on them, ought never to be forgiven in this world, whatever a sincere contrition, if he is capable of it, may entitle him to in the next!

CHAP. IV.

THE AUTHOR HAVING FOUND SOMETHING IN HIS RAMBLES WHICH HE SUPPOSES MAY BE OF VALUE TO THE OWNER, CONDESCENDS TO TAKE UPON HIM THE OFFICE OF A TOWN-CRIER, BUT WAVES THE CEREMONY OF THE GREAT O YES.

HAPPENING one morning to wake more early than ordinary, I quitted my bed; and the weather being fine, and my humour more inclined to seriousness than gaiety, I took a little walk into Hyde Park, not with the least expectation of making any discovery of other people's affairs, but merely to think of my own with more liberty than I could do at home. I met no living creature in my way, except some birds that perched upon the twigs of the leafless trees, and in melodious notes chanted forth praises to the approaching spring. These rather indulging meditation, I passed slowly on by the side of the Serpentine River; where my eyes were attracted with the sight of a white satin pocket lying just before me. I suppose it might have been dropped from some lady's side the night before; for, on my taking it up, I found it extremely damp with dew. I looked upon this as a lawful prize, and that I had a right to keep it, at least till I could find somebody that had a better title; I therefore tied it up in my handkerchief, and, after having finished my walk, took it home with me, where my impatience did not suffer me to continue long without examining it. I shall give a faithful inventory of all the particulars, reserving only one in petto, in order to prevent being imposed upon by any fictitious claimant.

Money being the chief idol of mankind,

kind, I shall give that the preference, and begin with the purse, which had in it five gold ducats, a leaden French shilling, a bent half-crown, and a medal of the Duke of Cumberland in copper, very curious, but by some accident had been cracked, and the impression in several parts pretty much erased. The next thing that presented itself was a very small pocket-book; which I shall forbear to describe, as well as make any mention of the memorandums it contained, to any person in the world but to the lady who wrote and shall come to demand them. There was also a chrystal smelling-bottle half full of sal armoniac, a tortoise-shell snuff-box rimmed with gold, and a naked Venus painted on the inside.

But the most valuable part of this cargo, at least according to my opinion, was some papers; not Bank-bills, but letters, and other writings, more deserving the attention of the publick, and which I shall make no scruple to insert, as they gradually fell under my inspection; especially as all of them having been sent under covers, which were not in the packet, the name of the lady to whom they were directed can only be guessed at.

LETTER I.

MADAM,

I Now send you the catalogue you have so often requested; but in treat you will be so good as not to let any one soul in the world know you had it from him who has the honour to be, with the greatest respect, &c.

The name subscribed to this had been torn off, either by design or accident; but the paper which accompanied it was perfect and entire. Here follows a faithful transcript.

A CATALOGUE OF SOME VERY SCARCE AND CURIOUS PIECES, IN PROSE AND VERSE: ALL WROTE BY SOME OF THE MOST EMINENT HANDS.

1. THE Art of Pleasing in Conversation. An Heroick Poem. By the E— of C—.

2. An Essay on Power. Wrote ori-

ginally in High Dutch, and now translated by a person of distinction into English. Bound in red Turkey, finely gilt and lettered.

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X

Good

Good Sense. By the E—— of O——. Bound in plain blue Turkey.

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22. An Eulogy on Apostacy. By L—— G——. Bound in calf, and gilt back.

23. Love in a Bottle. A Poem, in Three Cantos. By the E—— of M——. Stitched in blue paper.

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27. The Fox Weary of Goose Hunting. A Fable. By the D—— of D——. Bound in parchment.

28. The Lover's Catechism. A New Ballad. By the celebrated Miss A——.

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36. Second Thoughts Best. A Philosophical Treatise, dedicated to a Brother of the Horn. By Mr. W——. Bound in sheeps-skin.

37. The Triumvirate of Converts. Being a Series of Epistles on Moral and Religious Subjects, which passed between L—— T——, C—— G——, and Mrs. C——. In boards.

38. The Escape. A Satire. Inscribed to L—— D—— M——, by a Well-wisher to her Ladyship.

39. A Letter sent with a Side of Venison to the celebrated Mrs. J—— D——, in the Piazza, Covent Garden. By L—— T——e.

40. A Short Treatise concerning Publick and Private Charities; proving to a Demonstration, that the former are of much more Emolument to the Giver than the latter. By L—— E—— J——. Curiously bound, with a Register.

41. The Humiliation. A Poem. Addressed to the Inexorables. By L—— G—— S——. Stitched.

42. A Prophecy that Votes for Members of Parliament will fall to no Price at the next Westminster Election. By Sir W—— Y——.

Having folded and replaced this paper in the pocket whence I had taken it, I proceeded to the other.

LETTER II.

‘DEAR MADAM,

‘IT must be confessed you are endowed with a courage and resolution superior to what most of your sex can boast of; but you must give me leave to say, at the same time, that in these affairs we men run much the greatest hazards: in case of a discovery, our persons are liable to fall a sacrifice to the resentment of an injured husband, and our fortunes sure to be ruined by way of reparation of his disgrace; whereas the worst you have to fear is a divorce. The laws are favourable to wives; the portion you brought with you is either returned, or an annuity equivalent: and as for the little shame you sustain by such a procedure, it is well atoned for by your

your being freed from the loathsome
 'caresses of the man you hate, and at
 'full liberty to pursue your inclinations
 'with him you love. Be assured, Ma-
 'dam, I would venture much for the
 'continuance of the blessing you permit
 'me to enjoy; but I find the intercourse
 'between us begins to be suspected, and
 'you must therefore pardon me that I
 'yield to necessity, and refrain any far-
 'ther meetings with you, at least for
 'the present. I was yesterday at court,
 'and heard some whispers, that your
 'jealous Coxcomb would soon be sent
 'abroad: if such a thing should happen,
 'as I have some pretty good reasons to
 'believe it will, I shall return with dou-
 'ble transport to your embraces; till
 'then, prudence obliges me to deny
 'myself that happiness. But at how
 'great a distance soever I keep my per-
 'son, I beg you will do me the justice
 'to believe my heart is always with
 'you; and that I can never cease to be,
 'with the greatest sincerity, &c.

‘PHILETES.’

‘P. S. I would not have you har-
 'bour any unjust suspicions either
 'of me or your fair friend; for,
 'upon my soul! I never had the
 'least design upon her in the way
 'you mean; and you will find,
 'whenever it is convenient for me
 'to renew my devoirs to you, that
 'I like no woman better than your-
 'self. Once more I bid you un-
 'willingly adieu.’

LETTER III.

‘DEAR CREATURE,

‘YOUR Damon, and my Strephon,
 'as we call them, are both with
 'me. They have found out the most
 'charming place that ever was for us to
 'scamper to, whenever we can delude
 'the eyes of our impertinent gaolers.
 'If you can find any excuse to get
 'loose from yours, the rendezvous agreed
 'upon is the banks of the Serpentine
 'River, just after sun-set, whence we
 'are to follow our leaders where they
 'shall please to conduct us. Lady
 'Fillup has a route to-night; you may
 'tell your tyrant you are going there.
 'But why should I put pretences into

‘a head so much more fertile than my
 'own? Fail not to come, however, if
 'it be not a thing utterly impossible for
 'human wit to accomplish: but let us
 'know your resolution by the bearer.
 'I am, &c.

‘CORINNA.

‘P. S. While I was writing the
 'above, Damon, to shew either
 'his love or wit, or both, took up
 'a pen, and employed it in the en-
 'closed.’

“TO MY SOUL’S TREASURE,

“FLY, charmer, fly! leave homebred
 'cares behind;
 "With thoughts of coming joys fill all
 'your mind:
 "Let smiling pleasure wanton o'er your
 'face,
 "And kindling transports brighten ev'ry
 'grace.
 "Each vein of mine beats high with love's
 'alarms;
 "Haste, then, and lull me gently in your
 'arms!”

“I know I am a bad poet, but you
 "will find me a better lover, and that
 "your charms are capable of inspiring
 "me with more fire than all the ladies
 "of Parnassus put together. I am, &c.

“DAMON.”

The letter of Philetes, and that of
 Corinna and Damon, being dated on
 the same day, discovered to me that the
 lady who received them was not quite
 inconsolable for the loss of one lover, as
 she had another in store; and also that
 she failed not to comply with the invi-
 tation of Damon, and that she had drop-
 ped her pocket at the rendezvous ap-
 pointed by Corinna.

I make no question but that the inquisi-
 tive reader would be glad to know the
 name and rank of this so much ad-
 mired lady; but as I can do no more,
 at most, than guess at either, I should
 be loth to impose my bare and uncer-
 tain conjectures upon the publick, for
 fear of a mistake, and being guilty of
 the worst of wrongs, that of preju-
 dicing the character of an innocent per-
 son. I wish every one would pay as
 much regard as myself to what Shake-
 speare says on this occasion—

X 2

‘Good

- Good name, in man or woman,
- Is the immediate jewel of our souls.
- Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis
 something, nothing;
- 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave
 to thousands;
- But he that filches from me my good
 name,
- Robs me of that which not enriches him,
- And makes me poor indeed.'

Could I have formed even the most distant supposition to what place Strephon and Damon had conducted their ladies, I doubt not but my curiosity would have carried me thither, where my enquiries might perhaps have gained me the satisfaction of knowing how much of the night these inamoratos had passed together, and in what manner they had been entertained; but no mention being made of any thing farther than the place where they were to meet, I was obliged to content myself with what discoveries I had made, and so must the reader also.

I cannot conclude this chapter without an observation which has constantly occurred to me whenever any thing fell in my way of the kind I have been relating, which is this. As the wife has the honour of her husband in keeping, it seems to me a most ungenerous and cruel addition to the crime of wronging his bed, when by publick indiscretions she exposes him to that contempt and ridicule which the world, though without the least shadow of reason or justice, is always sure to cast upon the husband of a transgressing wife.

I know very well people are apt to say, that when a woman abandons herself to vice, she presently becomes utterly incapable of paying any regard to her own reputation, much less to that of her husband; and that it appears a much greater matter of surprize when they see women, as it must be confessed many such there are, who, without being criminal in fact, behave in such a manner as to draw on themselves the severest censures. Though I must allow that this too frequently happens, yet I cannot agree in opinion with those who seem to wonder it should be so, and look upon it as a kind of inconsistency in nature; I rather imagine that guilt is more likely to inspire circumspection. A woman who knows herself culpable, I should expect to be very careful not to

do any thing in publick that might cause suspicion of her being less reserved in private; whereas a consciousness of innocence, especially in a thoughtless disposition, may easily render a woman unguarded, and less observant of those decorums which, though not essential to virtue, are doubtless necessary to reputation.

CHAP. V.

TURN'S CHIEFLY UPON THE SUBJECT OF EDUCATION, AND CONTAINS SOME THINGS WHICH THE AUTHOR IS APPREHENSIVE WILL NOT BE VERY AGREEABLE TO THE FEMALE PART OF HIS READERS.

THE good or the ill fortune of our whole lives chiefly depends on the first bent given to our minds in youth. Impressions made in our early years take a deep root within us, grow up with us to maturity, become part of ourselves; so that they may properly be called a second nature, and are seldom, if ever, totally eradicated. According to one of our English poets—

- Children, like tender osiers, take the bow;
- And, as they first are fashion'd, still will
 grow.'

For this reason it is that parents, unless they are very remiss indeed, take so much pride in the education of their children, bestowing on them every accomplishment befitting their rank and circumstances, and oftentimes more than will well agree with either. Yet all this will not do; there are some previous steps to be taken, without which all the improvements we can make, from the lessons of the most able masters, will never render us worthy the esteem of others, or truly happy in ourselves, for any length of time. Pride, and an impatience of controul, are the first propensities discoverable in human nature: if these are humoured and indulged in their beginnings, which is indeed in our most early years, they will soon become too headstrong and too turbulent to be afterwards restrained and subjected to the government of reason by any methods whatever that can be taken for that

that purpose; the first indications should therefore be carefully watched, and checked in every instance.

I smile to think what objections are commonly made, by some over-fond parents, to such a manner of proceeding. If I am not mistaken, these two are the principal: that to curb children too much is apt to break their spirits; and that the world being so full of disappointments, few people escape them when they come to maturity, it is pity the poor things should know sorrow before their time. To both which I take the liberty to make this reply—

First, as to what they call the breaking of the spirit. That due decorum I would recommend, takes no more of the spirit from the young Master or Miss than what is necessary to keep them from running into those follies and excesses which, how excuseable soever in childhood, render them contemptible in riper years; as the skilful gardener lops from his tender plant those superfluous branches which, if suffered to continue, would hinder it from growing to perfection. Then, as to the second, every one knows the sorrows their little hearts are capable of feeling make no lasting impression on them; they will cry one moment, and laugh the next. The contradiction they meet with will only make them sensible that they neither can nor ought to expect they are to have their will in all things; and the trifling disappointments given them, will enable them to sustain with fortitude those of more consequence, which may hereafter possibly befall them. A boy is less liable to the danger of being spoiled by too much indulgence than a girl; because he is no sooner taken from the nursery, than he is either put out to school, or, if of a superior rank, under the inspection of a tutor.

I have the honour to be pretty nearly related, by marriage, to Lady Plyant; her late husband being my first cousin. Decency obliges me to visit the widow sometimes: she is a very affable, good-natured woman; and has, indeed, a greater share of understanding than her too great compliance with the customs of the age will permit her to make shew of. She keeps a prodigious deal of company, for which reason I see her much less frequently than otherwise I should do; but happening to pass by her house one day when no coach or chair

was in waiting there, I ventured to knock at the door, and was glad to be told she was alone. I had not, however, been with her above ten minutes, before two or three loud raps proclaimed the approach of some new guest, and presently after a grave elderly lady was introduced. Lady Plyant received her with much politeness, and a great shew of friendship; and, after the first salutations were over, and we had re-seated ourselves, said to her—

Lady Plyant. Dear Mrs. Loyter, I have not seen you this age, and have been quite unhappy in the want of you.

Mrs. Loyter. Dear Lady Plyant, the loss is wholly mine. But I have been so embarrassed—my poor girl has been extremely indisposed.

Lady Plyant. Bless me! Miss not well, and I hear nothing of it! But I hope she is better?

Mrs. Loyter. Perfectly recovered, Madam. She will have the honour of waiting on your ladyship this evening. She is gone to make a few visits, but prayed heartily to find nobody at home, that she might follow me here the sooner.

Lady Plyant. How perfectly kind that was! Well, she is a charming creature; you are the happiest woman in the world in having such a daughter. I protest, among all my acquaintance, I do not know any young lady that comes up to her; there is something so sweet, so engaging, in every thing she does.

Mrs. Loyter. She is infinitely obliged to your ladyship. Indeed, I have taken a great deal of pains with her; for, as I have no other daughter, I should never have forgiven myself if I had not used my utmost endeavours to form her mind so as to make her as agreeable as possible to her acquaintance.

Lady Plyant. Oh, Madam, the world must allow you have; Miss is the darling of every body that knows her.

Mrs. Loyter. The girl has a great deal of good-nature, Madam, and does not want a genius and capacity to mingle in conversation on almost any subject becoming a young lady to be acquainted with.—

I had been upon the wing to take my flight almost from the moment Mrs. Loyter came in; but what was said in relation to her daughter determined me to stay till Miss arrived, in order to be convinced how far her person and behaviour corresponded with the high character

rafter which had been given of her. At length Miss Loyter appeared, and I stretched my eyelids to their full extent, to take in all the charms I had heard she was possessed of. The girl, indeed, was well enough; but I could discover nothing extraordinary about her, nor did her eyes or air give any indications of that capacity her mother seemed to boast of; but as I thought it unfair to give a verdict on mere appearances, I suspended my judgment on her understanding till I had more substantial proofs.

The discourse at first was only on where she had been, who she had seen, and how such and such a lady was dressed. I found Miss talked very learnedly on this subject, and therefore was not without hope of hearing something from her equally lively on others of more importance; but none being started, I was compelled to listen to the several animadversions made by these three ladies on caps, flounces, and such like. At last, Miss happening to say that she had met Mrs. O—— in one of the visits she had been making, I presently caught up the word, and said to her—‘Then, Madam, I doubt not but some conversation passed which you will do us the favour to repeat, as the lady you mention is perfectly acquainted with publick affairs, and indeed reasons on them very justly.’ To which she replied—‘So they say, Sir; but she was just going out when I came in; and indeed I was heartily glad of it, for I hate to hear a deal of stuff about things I know nothing of.’ As I had a good share in the ensuing part of this conversation, I shall, to avoid confusion, repeat my own words as if spoke by another person.

Author. Then, Madam, you have no relish for politicks?

Miss. No truly, Sir. What business have I with the transactions of kings, and princes, and parliaments? It makes me sick to hear so much of wars, and treaties, and conventions, and taxes, and grievances, and such nonsense.

Author. I must confess, Madam, the affairs of Europe are a little intricate at present, and may be puzzling to a lady’s comprehension; but I suppose you are not unacquainted with the histories of former times.

Miss. Lord, Sir, what have I to do with former times?

Author. Every one, Madam, has to

do with the annals of the country they were born in.

Mrs. Loyter. These things are quite out of my daughter’s way; but for all that, I can assure you, Sir, she reads a great deal.

Author. It would be a pity, indeed, Madam, so fine a young lady should be altogether ignorant of books. I imagine, therefore, that Miss’s genius soars to a higher pitch, the wonders of the creation; I make no question but she has read *Le Spectacle de la Nature*.

Mrs. Loyter. I believe not, Sir.—Have you, my dear?

Miss. Not I, truly; but I have heard enough of it. They say there are four volumes of it taken up with nothing but a description of trees, birds, beasts, fishes, and nasty insects.

Author. What do you think, Madam, of Fontenelle’s *Plurality of Worlds*?

Miss. O hang it, I was never so disappointed in my life; I thought by the beginning, when I found a gentleman and lady were taking their walk together by moon-light, some pretty adventure would have ensued; but, good God! the author has made them talk of nothing but planets, and the things that happen in the sky.

Author. I fancy, then, Miss, romances and novels are chiefly your taste.

Miss. I hate romances, they are too tedious; as for novels, I like some of them well enough, particularly Mrs. Behn’s: but I know not how it is, the authors now-a-days have got such a way of breaking off in the middle of their stories, that one forgets one half before one comes to the other.

Author. Digressions, Miss, when they contain fine sentiments and judicious remarks, are certainly the most valuable parts of that sort of writing.

Miss. I cannot think so; and I could wish the authors would keep their sentiments and remarks to themselves, or else have them printed in a different letter, that one might know when to begin and when to leave off.

Author. I presume, Miss, you are fond of poetry?

Miss. Not very fond; I can’t say I ever read much of it.—

I thought I had now sufficiently sounded the genius and capacity of this young lady; therefore ceased to engross her any longer to myself, and soon after took my

my leave, secretly wondering at the strange partiality of Mrs. Loyter, in regard both of herself and daughter. A few hours, however, made me begin to judge somewhat more favourably of these ladies. 'Though Mrs. Loyter,' said I within myself, 'is mistaken in believing she has been able to make her daughter pass for a wit, her endeavours, notwithstanding, may have had better success in other accomplishments more essential to her happiness; she may have made her a good economist, and perfectly acquainted with every thing requisite for the well managing a family.'

I had the more reason to imagine that this young lady was trained up in frugality and good housewifery, as I had been told, that Mr. Loyter lived to the height of his income; that he saved no money; had several sons, the eldest of whom, after his decease, was to run away with the estate; so that it could not be expected the daughter would have any fortune to entitle her to a husband at all suitable to the appearance she made. But, as I was always willing to be convinced whether my conjectures were right or wrong, I resolved to make an Invisible Visit to this family. Just as I came to the house, Mr. Loyter was going out, and the door being opened for him, I slipped in, and went up stairs. The old lady was sitting in the dining-room window with her spectacles on, very hard at work. Breakfast was but just over, as I found by the maid's removing the tea-equipage; and Miss was gone up to dress, it seems, for she came down presently after in the same form I had seen her at Lady Plyant's: she ran directly to the great glass, in order to examine how her petticoats hung at the bottom; and then turned to her mother, and seeing what she was about, said to her—

Miss. Lord, mamma, have you not done mending my tippet yet!

Mrs. Loyter. Indeed, my dear, it is past mending; you have torn the lace in twenty places, I believe, with those ugly pins in your stomacher; I wish you would take more care of your things.

Miss. Indeed I can't be a slave to my cloaths.

Mrs. Loyter. I would not have you, my dear; but this vexes me, because it is the only handsome tippet you have. You must even try to coax your father to give you a couple of pieces to buy you another, the first time you find him in a good hu-

mour; for I assure you I have not a single guinea in the world.

Miss. Well, 'tis a shameful thing one has not money enough without asking for, when one has a fancy to any thing. But, mamma, can nothing be done with this lace?

Mrs. Loyter. It will never make up again in the shape it is; but I believe I may contrive to make a handsome tucker of it.

Miss. Oh, I shall like a tucker of it vastly. Pray, mamma, do it as soon as you can.

Mrs. Loyter. Where are you going, my dear?

Miss. I am only going to the next street to Lady Lovetoy's, to ask if Miss will take a walk with me in the Park.

Mrs. Loyter. Do not stay too long; your father brings company home to-day, and we are to have a great dinner. Mr. Blossom, and his son just come from the university, are to be here, so I would not have you out of the way for the world; who can tell what may happen?

Miss. Oh, why did not I know that sooner? I would have had on my new gauze cap; but, 'tis no matter, I will come home time enough to change it.

With these words she snatched up her little muff, and galloped down stairs, leaving her poor mother poring over the breaches she had undertaken to rectify.

Methinks I hear how heartily the gay and witty part of my readers will laugh at the character of Miss Loyter; they will certainly look upon her as a stalking, staring, stupid, noteless creature; a moving piece of mere matter, uninformed by any soul or spirit, wholly incapable of deserving praise, and equally insensible of contempt. 'Tis true she appears so, yet may it not be owing so much to any deficiency of nature in her, as to the mistaken fondness of a mother, who, fearing to give her a moment's discontent, neglected to rouse the native sluggishness of her faculties by any exercise or employment.

What therefore can be expected from a young person bred in a supine indolence, accustomed to have her will in every thing, and scarce taught the difference between good and evil; but that she should, all her life, act as chance, or as her own undistinguishing fancy shall direct?—Bless all sober and thinking men from a wife of this cast!

CHAP. VI.

THE AUTHOR EXPECTS WILL MAKE
A FULL ATONEMENT TO THE
LADIES FOR TOO MUCH PLAIN
DEALING, AS SOME OF THEM MAY
THINK, OF THE PRECEDING
CHAPTER.

WOMEN and wedlock are the common topicks of ridicule among men who, without one spark of genius or capacity, imagine themselves wits, and set up for such: but, whatever either they, or some who even have a better way of thinking in other things, pretend to alledge against the sex, it is very evident, and must be confessed, that Nature has endowed the minds of many women with as great and valuable talents as ever she bestowed on men.

Numberless are the examples which might be brought from the records, both of ancient and modern history, to prove the truth of this assertion; but I shall content myself with mentioning only a few, yet enough to make those unworthy maligners of a sex, to whom they know in their own hearts they are indebted for all the convenience and happiness of their lives, take shame to themselves, and blush for what they have said. Who is so ignorant, as not to have heard of the famed Cornelia of Rome; the mother of the Gracchi, and the wife of Brutus; the learned Hypatia of Greece; the Boadicea and the Cartismuda of ancient Britain? But it is needless to look back into such distant times; the wife of the late Peter the Great of Muscovy; the imperial heroine of Germany; Signora Laura of Italy; and the present queens of Sweden and the Two Sicilies; are no less publick than shining proofs of the capacity of a female mind. And even here, there are not wanting some, I may say many ladies, who in private, and almost obscure life, are possessed of qualifications that might add lustre to the highest stations. In fine, there is nothing more certain, than that if the women, generally speaking, are less knowing than the men, it is only because they are denied the same advantages of education, and the mistaken mother lavishes her whole cares in embellishing the pretty person of her daughter, and gives no attention to the cultivation of her understanding.

I am happy in the acquaintance of a

lady whom I shall distinguish by the name of Amadea: she had been married very young to a gentleman whom she tenderly loved, and by whom she was no less beloved; but had the misfortune to lose him at the age of twenty-five, and was at the same time the mother of three daughters, the eldest scarce four years old. The land estate, which was very considerable, descended to the next male heir of the family; and all the personals, with a jointure of four hundred per annum, to the fair widow, and each of her children five thousand pounds.

The first three years of her widowhood she lived the life of a recluse, seldom stirring out of her own house, except to her devotions, or when the necessity of her affairs obliged her. Nor did she, with her mourning, throw this reserve entirely off: though it is now full thirteen years since her dear husband's death, she neither visits nor receives visits as formerly, but confines her conversation to those of her kindred, or very long and intimate acquaintance; never appears at any publick diversion, and rejects even the first mention of proposals for a second marriage, though several very advantageous ones have been attempted.

All her cares have been turned on the education of her children, and all her pleasures centered in observing the improvements they made by the instructions given to them. She had never suffered their infancy to be frightened with idle stories of spirits and hobgoblins, nor amused with fairy tales: from their most early years she awakened reason in them; and contrived it so, that even the little sports she indulged them in, should some way or other conduce to that great end.

As they grew bigger, she had masters to teach them music and dancing, the French and Italian languages, and as much of the Latin as was sufficient to make them speak and write English properly: but these politer studies were not to take up all their time; the economy of domestick life she looked upon as too necessary a qualification not to be well attended to; some hours in every day were set apart for needle-work; and, whenever the table was to be furnished with any thing extraordinary, they were sure to be put under the tuition of the cook, and frequently assisted her in those parts of her business which were the most delicate and least laborious.

Thus desirous of enriching their minds

with

with every useful kind of knowledge, it cannot be supposed that books were out of the question; no, each of these young ladies takes upon her, in her turn, to read to the two others the whole time they are at work. But, above all other things, this discreet mother was studiously watchful to prevent the pride and little vanities, so incident to human nature, from taking too fast hold of their young hearts. Betimes she taught them, that nothing concerning themselves, except the embellishment of their minds, was worthy their attention; that all cares relating to dress or person, beyond what cleanliness and decency required, were superfluous and silly; and that every minute wasted at the toilet would rob them of some advantage they might otherwise receive. I am well aware, those of my fair readers who have been brought up in a different manner—which, by the way, I fear are much the greatest part—will be apt to cry out against the conduct of Amadea; they will perhaps say, they wonder the poor girls are not moped, and that they must certainly be dull, stupid creatures; but those who think thus need only have a sight of the young ladies to be convinced of their mistake: nothing can be more lively and spirituous than all the three sisters; smiles of innocence and joy dwell for ever on their faces, and denote an innate cheerfulness and satisfaction, which all those hurrying pleasures, so eagerly pursued by others, have not the power of bestowing.

I made several Invisible Visits to them in their own apartment; and I know very few things capable of giving me a more sincere delight than I took in observing their behaviour, at times when they thought themselves entirely free from all inspection, and had no occasion to put restraint upon their words or actions. Never did I find them lolling out of a window, or consulting their looks or motions in the great glass; never heard them complaining they were not permitted to be first in every new fashion; never wishing to be in the Mall, or any other public place; never wantonly giggling about love or lovers; never quarrelling with each other, or ridiculing the foibles of their acquaintance. Sometimes I caught them playing and singing to their instruments; at others, amusing themselves with practising some new dance, and not seldom busily employed in needle-work for the use of the family; and at the

same time, making such remarks as occurred to them on some passage or other in history: in fine, I could perceive nothing but what put me in mind of the three Graces, who, according to one of our poets, are actuated but by one soul, and that all harmony and sweet contentment.

The truth is, Amadea never makes use of any austerities; the precepts she gives are only enforced by her own example, and delivered in such a manner as to steal themselves upon the mind, and have no need of any compunction from authority: so that one may truly say—

‘ Wisdom in her appears so bright and gay,
‘ They hear with pleasure, and with pride
‘ obey.

Happy the children who have such a mother; happy the mother who has children such as these! I am persuaded, many examples of this kind might be found, if parents would be at the pains to pursue the same measures Amadea did, and instil into their offspring the principles of virtue and wisdom, before they knew what was meant by vice and folly.

C H A P. VII.

CONTAINS THE RECITAL OF AN ADVENTURE, WHICH, PERHAPS, WILL NOT BE FOUND LESS INTERESTING, FOR IT'S BEING NOT ALTOGETHER OF SO SINGULAR A NATURE AS SOME OTHERS IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE APPEARED.

I Was one morning taking my Invisible progression into those pleasant fields which lie behind Montague House, not with the least view of making any discoveries, for I could expect none in that retired place, but merely to enjoy the benefit of the fresh air. I had not walked many minutes, however, before I heard the tread of some persons close behind me. I stepped aside to let them pass, and saw that one of them was Narcissa, the only daughter of a gentleman who lived in that neighbourhood. The person who accompanied her was her maid, as I soon after found by the following dialogue between them—

Narcissa. Indeed, Betty, I think Captain Pike shews but little love to let us be here before him.

Y

Betty.

Betty. Oh, Madam, you should consider that gentlemen in his post are not always masters of their time: you know he said he came to town on affairs of the regiment, and something, perhaps, may have happened; but, whatever it is that detains him, it cannot be for want of affection; I am so certain of that, I would pawn my life upon it.

Narcissa. You are very confident, Betty, to offer such security for a man you have never seen but twice in your life.

Betty. If I had never seen him but once, Madam, I have seen enough to make me know that he loves you to distraction. Poor gentleman! if he should not succeed in his addresses, I am sure he has reason to curse me.

Narcissa. Curse thee, Betty!—why curse thee?

Betty. He might never have seen you if it had not been for me. Don't you remember, Madam, how I teased you to go into a shop, and buy the last new play? He was sitting reading when we came in; and I shall never forget how he threw down the pamphlet he had in his hand, and stared at you, and how he sighed. Poor soul! he lost his heart from that very moment. Then how he followed us into the Park; and how he trembled when he asked your leave to join us!

Narcissa. Pish! that might be all affection.

Betty. No, Madam, no such matter; the tone may deceive one, but the eyes cannot. And then, when you were so good to give him a meeting afterwards in the walk by Rosamond's Pond, how tenderly he expressed himself! For my part, my heart melted at every word he said.

Narcissa. He can talk moving enough, that's certain; but yet, Betty, I ought not to be too hasty in giving credit to a man I know so little of, or what designs he may have upon me.

Betty. Nay, Madam, I think you know as much of him as you can do without being married to him. Did not he tell you his name was Pike, and that he was a captain of Colonel ~~*****~~'s regiment? As to his designs, you cannot doubt of their being honourable, as he begged you would permit him to visit you, and ask your father's leave to make his addresses.

Narcissa. Ah, Betty, I wish such a thing could be, for he is a prodigious

pretty man; but it is impossible! You know my father hates a soldier, calls them a pack of locusts; besides, he has always designed me for Mr. Oakly.

Betty. Aye, Madam, and will make you have Mr. Oakly too, or lead apes to hell, if you don't take care to prevent it.

Narcissa. Heigh ho!

Betty. Never sigh, Madam, but resolve.

Narcissa. On what?

Betty. To run away from a forced marriage; to exert the spirit of a true-born Englishwoman, and be your own provider.

Narcissa. How thou talkest!

Betty. I talk nothing but reason, Madam. But here comes one who I fancy will be able to urge it more effectually.

The person whom she had been so strenuously pleading for, now appeared: he was a tall, well-made man, and had a good soldierly aspect; but yet I thought I discovered something about him that shewed he had not always been accustomed to wear the rich cloaths he now had on; there wanted that easy freedom in his air, which denotes the true-bred gentleman; and I presently set him down in my mind, either for an impostor, or one whom some lucky chance had elevated far above his birth. He approached Narcissa with a low bow; and after taking hold of one of her hands, and kissing it with the greatest fervency, addressed her in these terms—

Capt. How miserable have I been, my angel, in being kept thus long from your divine presence!

Narcissa. I do not doubt, Sir, but you have been better engaged.

Capt. Cruel supposition! How can you so far wrong me, as to imagine that the whole world has anything in it I should put in competition with the blessing I now enjoy? But the major of our regiment is in town, and unluckily sent for me this morning: we subalterns must obey our commanding officer; but I hope in a few months to be colonel, and I shall then have leisure to lie eternally at your feet.

Betty. Ah, Sir, I am afraid, before that time, my lady will be obliged to have somebody else lie at her feet.

Narcissa. Hold your prating, hussy. Who gave you the privilege of speaking?

Betty. Madam, the respect I have for you will not suffer me to be silent.—I tell

tell you nothing but the truth, Sir; my lady will be forced to marry a man to whom she has the greatest aversion.

Capt. O Heaven! so near being torn from all my hopes! And can you, Madam, can a lady of your delicacy submit—

Narcissa. Sir, this foolish wench talks she knows not what; I may live single if I please.

Capt. Live single! Heaven forbid! No, nature endowed you not with such superior charms, but to bless some man who, by his abundant love, might make him worthy of them. O that I were the happy he!

Narcissa. Think not of it, Captain; my father would never give his consent to any one but the person he has made choice of for me; much less would he endure to see me wedded to a gentleman in the army.

Capt. And have you, too, that implacable aversion to a sash and crosslet?

Narcissa. I will not pretend to say I have; I think the army our only security in time of war, and the greatest ornament of our country in times of peace.

Capt. O, then, if I could flatter myself there was nothing in my person more disagreeable to you than in my function, I should have nothing left to fear.

Narcissa. Yes, indeed, you would, Sir, a great deal; for I assure you, if I married you, my father would not give me a groat.

Capt. Let him keep his dirty trash; I despise money; the commission I enjoy at present will keep us above contempt, and I have money in the Bank ready to purchase the first vacant command of a regiment.

Narcissa. Can you imagine I would give myself to a man who has but just begun to tell me that he loves me?

Capt. My whole life shall be but one continued scene of courtship; be assured I shall not be the less, but infinitely the more your adorer by being your husband. O, then, be just to my ardent passion, generously put an end to my despair.

Narcissa. Bless me, what would the world say of such a thing!

Capt. The wife, Madam, despise all forms. Do not kings and princes marry those they never saw before? Besides, the late proceedings of the legislature lay you under a necessity of coming to a speedy resolution.

Betty. Aye, Madam, remember the aft.

Capt. Aye, Madam, consider how soon that fatal Monday will arrive, which takes from you the power of snatching from misery the man who loves you more than life, and would sacrifice every thing for you!

Narcissa. I must confess, Captain, your offering to take me without a fortune demands some gratitude on my part; and if— But no more; I see a lady yonder whom I would not wish should surprise us in this conversation; this evening you shall know my final resolution. Where can I send to you?

Capt. I have an appointment with some young officers this afternoon at Will's Coffee-House, Whitehall, and shall there wait my doom with the most ardent impatience; but before you pass the sentence of my fate, think, O think, my life or death depends upon it!

Narcissa. Well, well, be easy; but go.

Capt. I must obey; may Love and all it's powers plead for me!

He said no more, but turned away as his mistress had commanded, and passed on to another part of the field, while she advanced to meet the lady she had mentioned. But Betty, who was heartily vexed at this accident, could not forbear crying out as they went along—'I wonder what should bring Marilla here!'

The words were either not heard, or not regarded by Narcissa, who, I could perceive by her looks, was little less disconcerted: she met her friend, however, with a shew of gaiety and satisfaction; and as soon as they came near each other, saluted her in these terms—

Narcissa. My dear Marilla! it is a wonder to see you in such a place as this; you used to be an enemy to all solitary walks.

Marilla. So I am still; but I have been at your house, and was told you were here, so came in mere good nature to hinder you from indulging melancholy; but I find I might have spared myself that trouble. Pray, who was that pretty fellow that left you just now?

Narcissa. I know not, he only came up to us, seeing nobody else in the place. I suppose, to ask which was the nearest way to Great Russel Street.

Marilla. Rather to ask the way to a lady's heart, who lives not far from Great Russel Street. Oh, Narcissa, you cannot deceive me; I could easily perceive, at

the distance I was, that he did not part from you with the air of a man who had no other business than to ask such an impertinent question. Besides, I must tell you that you are a very ill dissembler; your blushes declare that he is a lover: I know well enough that you met him here by appointment. Pity thee, let me into the whole of the secret.

Narcissa still persisted in her first assertions; but the other seemed not to give credit on that score, and assuming a more serious air, spoke thus—

Marilla. I perceive, my dear Narcissa, I am not thought worthy of your confidence, though I am very certain you have not a friend in the world who wishes your happiness with more sincerity than I do.

Narcissa. I believe it, my dear, and am much obliged to you; but you would not have me tell lies to shew my gratitude?

Marilla. Well, well, I shall urge you no farther; and should not have been so impertinent to take any notice of what I saw, but for the transport it gave me to imagine you might now have an opportunity of delivering yourself from the danger of being forced into a marriage with a man whom I have heard you declare so great an aversion for.

Narcissa. And suppose the thing were really as you have taken it into your head to fancy, would you have me disoblige my father by marrying without his consent?

Marilla. Yes, when he will give his consent to nobody but one with whom you must be miserable; for, besides the dislike you have to the person of Oakly, his temper is such as would break a woman's heart in two months. You know I am very intimate with his sister, and cannot avoid seeing oddities in his behaviour as have made me tremble for you a thousand times.

Narcissa. I cannot think my father will ever go about to compel my inclinations.

Marilla. Oakly is of another opinion; for I can tell you, he makes no scruple to say, that if you do not marry him, you will marry nobody: therefore, without diving into the secrets of your heart, let me advise you, my dear creature, not to lose the short time allowed you, but if you have any offer less disagreeable to you than Oakly, accept it at

once; three days hence it will be out of your power.

Narcissa. But, my dear, what man that is worth having will marry a woman without a fortune?

Marilla. If I were a man, I should tell you that your person was a sufficient fortune, and I do not doubt but that there are a great many who would think so. But you have two thousand pounds left you by your grandmother, independent of your father; and I dare say, if you were once married, and the thing past recall, he would forgive it. Consider, you are his only daughter, and both your brothers are provided for, the one by an estate, and the other by a good preferment in the church.

What answer Narcissa would have made I know not: it began to rain very fast, so that the ladies were obliged to mend their pace, and make all the haste they could out of the field. Marilla took the first chair she met with, saying it would be dinner-time before she should be able to get dressed. Narcissa and her maid ran home through the shower, and I followed; not only to take shelter, but also to hear the result of the young lady's determination on what had passed between her and Captain Pike. As soon as they had plucked off their wet hats and capuchins, and Narcissa had a little re-settled herself, she said to her maid—

Narcissa. Well, Betty, this has been an odd morning!

Betty. I hope it will prove a lucky one, Madam. But I am glad you did not tell Marilla any thing of the matter.

Narcissa. She was so pressing, that I had half a mind; but when I considered how great she is with Oakly's sister, I thought it was better to keep her in ignorance.

Betty. Much better, indeed, Madam. But, pray, what do you resolve to do about the captain?

Narcissa. Why, I must e'en have him, I think.

Betty. You made him a kind of promise to send to him.

Narcissa. I did so, and will keep it. I will write to him this moment, before any company comes in to prevent me.

Betty. You are in the right, Madam: there is nothing like the time present.

TO CAPTAIN PIKE.

SIR,
I Should be guilty of an injustice both to myself and you, not to be sensible of the proof you offer of your sincerity. I find in it, indeed, all that can be imagined, and much more than could be expected, of love, honour, and generosity; and I hope I shall hereafter stand excused to my father and the world, for taking a step excited by gratitude, and approved of by my reason. Meet me, therefore, to-morrow morning, at eight precisely, in the Piazza next King Street, Covent Garden; where I will put myself under your protection, and be conducted by you to whatever place you shall judge most proper for the ceremony which must make me eternally yours.

NARCISSA.

Having sealed this billet, she gave it to her maid, with a strict charge to send it by a trusty messenger. On which the girl replied—'Yes, Madam, you may depend on the safe conveyance; for I will be the bearer of it myself.'

What farther chat passed between the mistress and maid was too insignificant to be repeated; nor, indeed, did I stay to hear much of it, having already gained all that was necessary for the present: so shut up my Tablets, and retired on the first opportunity I found for my leaving the house.

As it was plain to me, however, that Betty was deeply interested in the concession Narcissa had made to the captain, and I had also some suspicion that he was not in reality the person he pretended to be, I resolved to go in the evening to the coffee-house, and be witness of his behaviour on receiving the letter Betty was to bring. Accordingly I went, and found him there; not, as he said, in company with young officers, but sitting alone, in a corner of the room, with his hat very much flapped. A few minutes after I came in, a waiter called aloud to know if one Captain Pike was there; on which he started up, and answering to the name, was told a gentlewoman at the door desired to speak with him. He went hastily out, and I pursued his steps, not doubting but it

was the emissary of Narcissa: as soon as he saw it was she, he cried out, in some surprize—

Capt. What, sister, are you come yourself! You bring me no bad news, I hope?

Betty. No, no; the best you can expect. But walk this way; it is not proper to stand here to talk. For Heaven's sake! why did you venture to appoint such a publick place as this?

Capt. Nobody knows me here; my captain never uses this house. But tell me, how goes our affair?

Betty. Rarely. She will have you; here is her promise under her own hand.

By this time they were got about the middle of Scotland Yard; where Betty having given him the letter of Narcissa, he stopped to read it by the light of a lamp at a gentleman's door; and, as soon as he had finished, cried out—

Capt. This is brave, indeed! And nothing, sure, was ever so lucky as her fixing to-morrow for our wedding; for the captain went to Hampstead this morning, with a whore he picked up in the Park the other night, and will not be in town these two days; so I shall have all that time to myself, and can get at what cloaths and linen I want. But, my dear sister, what shall I do with this girl when I have married her? where must I carry her?

Betty. That is what I came to talk about. You must take a fine lodging for her, and order a handsome dinner to be provided at some tavern or other. Every thing must be done with a grand air, that she may suspect nothing till after you have consummated. Hah, brother!

Capt. But, Betty, I have no money: all will go wrong still if you cannot help me out.

Betty. Nothing would go right, if it were not for me: you may thank God for having such a sister; you might have been a foot-soldier else as long as you lived. But there is no time to be lost. I have brought you four pieces, and I believe that will be sufficient for every thing. Go and buy a ring, and secure a lodging, immediately.

Capt. You may be sure I shall not fail. But harkye, Betty, take care she brings the writings of her two thousand pounds, and all her jewels.

Betty.

Betty. Aye, aye; she shall leave nothing of value behind her. I'll engage.

With these words they separated; and I went home, heartily glad that I had made this discovery, and determined to save Narcissa, if possible, from the misfortune she was so near falling into; to which end I sat down to my escritoire, and immediately wrote to her father in the following terms—

TO JOHN ***** ESQ.

THE shock I am now about to give you, can only be excused by it's being done to prevent you from receiving a much greater and more lasting one. Sorry am I to tell you, yet so it is, your daughter Narcissa is on the point of utter destruction; she has promised, and is resolved to keep her word, to join herself in marriage with a wretch who, though of the most abject rank, in order to seduce her innocence, assumes the character of a gentleman, and calls himself Captain Pike. Betty, her waiting-maid, is sister to the impostor, and has been the conductress of the whole villainous design. Every thing is prepared for the accomplishment, and to-morrow is the day fixed; but I hope this intelligence will reach you time enough to prevent so irremediable an evil. I am, Sir, your unknown well-wisher and humble servant.

Having sent this away, and fully discharged what my honour and conscience represented as a duty, I flattered myself with the expectation of seeing, the next day, treachery and deceit receive the mortification they justly merited.

CHAP. VIII.

CONTAINS A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF THE INVISIBLE SPY, WITH SOME OTHER SUBSEQUENT PARTICULARS.

THOUGH I had not the least room to doubt but that the information I had given the father of Narcissa would have all the success I wished, yet

I could not avoid being extremely curious to see in what manner the person concerned would behave on this occasion. Accordingly, I went to the house the next morning about eleven, expecting to find that the maid had been turned out of doors, the mistress in tears for her disappointment, and the old gentleman rejoicing in the thoughts of having saved his beloved daughter from undoing herself. A servant happening to be at the door, receiving some shoes from a fellow who had been just cleaning them, I gained an easy access. Finding nobody in the lower floor, I went up stairs; but the same solitude reigned likewise there. I then proceeded a story higher, and there saw only a servant-maid sweeping out a room, which, by a toilette being set out, I judged was the chamber of Narcissa. I was very much surprized to find every thing so quiet in a place where I looked for nothing but confusion, and stopped on the stairs to consider what might be the occasion; when, on a sudden, I heard the ringing of a small bell, and presently after saw a footman running hastily up. I followed him where he went, which was into the chamber of Narcissa's father, who was not yet up, but now called for his cloaths. As he was putting them on, he cast his eyes on the table, and seeing a letter lie there, asked his man when, and from whom, it came. To which he replied—'Sir, it was left for you last night by a porter; but as you came home so late, would not disturb you with it.'

I was astonished on finding that this was no other than the letter I had sent him; but more troubled that, by the delivery of it being delayed, poor Narcissa had fallen into the trap laid for her. But if I, a stranger, could be so much affected, what agony must rend the tender father's heart! Scarce had he gone through the half of what I wrote, before he cried out, casting, at the same time, a look full of despair and rage upon his servant—

Father. Ill-fated wretch! what mischief, what ruin, has thy neglect brought upon me and my family! You imagined I was drunk last night, I suppose; but had I been so, here is enough in this letter to have brought me to my senses. But go, run up to my daughter's chamber; see if she be there.

Footman.

Footman. Sir, she went out very early this morning with Mrs. Betty, and is not yet come back.

Father. Nor ever will, I fear. The intelligence this brings is too true, I find. Run to Mr. Oakly and my cousin Johnson's; bid them come this instant. Fly!—and, do you hear, bring a coach with you. If I can recover her before consummation, her ruin may be yet prevented.

The fellow went on his errand; and the old gentleman in the mean time stamping, biting his lips, and shewing all the marks of an inward distraction, made an end of putting on his cloaths, in order to go in search of his lost daughter, when the gentlemen he had sent for should arrive: but I staid not to hear what method would be pursued for that purpose, as thinking it of no moment, and that it would be better to return again in the evening, when I might probably hear what success had attended their endeavours. The time I chose for going was as late at night as I thought I might get an opportunity of entering, yet the disconsolate father was but just come home: his two friends were with him; they said all they could to alleviate his sorrows, but it availed no more than preaching to the winds. They had found out, it seems, where the marriage was performed: after which, they went to all the taverns, coffee-houses, and other publick places, which they heard were frequented by officers, to enquire concerning one who called himself Captain Pike, but could not receive the least information of any one who bore that name; and all the consolation the old gentleman had for the pains he had taken was, the cruel certainty that his dear daughter was inevitably undone.

Though I saw very little probability of my being able to learn any thing more at this house than I had already done, yet I could not forbear calling constantly there every day; and at last, by this dint of continued application, I became acquainted with the whole melancholy secret of Narcissa's fate almost as soon as the family knew it themselves. The pretended captain had managed every thing according to the direction of his sister. As soon as the ceremony was over, he had conducted his bride to very handsome lodgings, where an en-

tertainment suitable to the occasion was provided; and the poor deluded young lady, seeing nothing but what served to make her satisfied with what she had done, in return for his imaginary generosity, made him a present of her two thousand pounds, which was in India bonds.

Her contentment might, perhaps, have lasted some little time longer than it did, if she had not proposed waiting on her father, to implore his forgiveness and blessing; on which the impostor, having now got his ends, thinking it needless to continue the deception any longer, confessed that he was no more than a private man in the army; but told her that he was now treating with his captain for his discharge, and would purchase a commission with some part of the money she had given him; and added, that till these two points were accomplished, it would be altogether improper to appear before her father.

Narcissa fell into the utmost distraction on this eclaircissement, vowed not to live with a wretch who had put so base a trick upon her, but would go home to her father, who she doubted not would find means to punish such a flagrant piece of villainy. He only laughed at her reproaches, and said, that as she was his wife, she had it not in her choice to leave him. Betty, also, now threw off the character of a servant, and assuming the authority of a sister, pretended to rebuke her idle prating, as she insolently termed it.

She found an opportunity, however, of making her escape, and fled for refuge to the house of a near relation; who, on hearing her story, undertook to intercede with her father; which he did so successfully, that the old gentleman forgave, and took her again into favour. All possible measures were taken to set aside the marriage, and compel the impostor to refund the money Narcissa had so unwarily bestowed upon him; but as he knew the law was too much on his side, having not married her in a false name, though under a false character, he carried things with a very high hand; would part with nothing, not even the jewels she had left behind; but even threatened to commence a process against any one who detained her person. In fine, all that could be done was to get him to sign articles of separation. After which

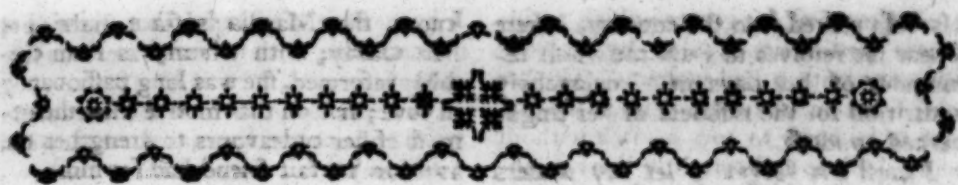
Narcissa

Narcissa retired into the country, where I hear she resolves to waste the whole remainder of her days in a melancholy contrition for the rashness of her ungoverned conduct.

I must not forget to let my readers

know, that Marilla is since married to Mr. Oakly; with whom, as I am credibly informed, she was long passionately in love; and on that motive used the utmost of her endeavours to strengthen the aversion her fair friend had for him.

END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.



THE
INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

THE AUTHOR FLATTERS HIMSELF
WILL BE NO UNACCEPTABLE
PRESENT TO ALL THOSE OF THE
FAIR SEX, WHO ARE EITHER
TRULY INNOCENT, OR WOULD
PRESERVE THE REPUTATION OF
BEING SO.



WHEN a young woman, of what rank or degree soever, indulges herself in a too great freedom of conversation with one of a loose and wanton behaviour, she cannot wonder that those who are witnesses of their intimacy should suspect her guilty of the same inclinations; and that, though perfectly innocent of the faults of her companion, is made an equal partaker of her shame. Women, who are either born to, or reduced by accidents, to low and indigent circumstances, excuse themselves by saying, that the necessity of their affairs compels them to keep an acquaintance with persons whom they find it their interest to oblige. But if this be an insufficient pretence, as certainly it is, since there is no interest which ought to be put in competition with reputation, what can be alledged in behalf of ladies of for-

tune and quality, who have it in their power to chuse their company, and it cannot be supposed would converse with any whose manners they did not approve?

In fine, there is no one error in conduct, which, according to my opinion, the sex in general should be more upon their guard against than this; for though some, dazzled with the pomp of shew and equipage, may be weak enough to imagine, that to appear in publick, or to be known to have an intimacy with a woman of a polluted fame, provided she be a person of condition, will bring no blemish on their own characters, nor be of any prejudice to their morals; yet that such an intimacy is extremely dangerous to both, may be very easily demonstrated.

As to character. If the world should be more silent than it ever was, or ever will be on such occasions, it cannot be expected that a woman, who has thrown off all regard for her own honour, should have any for that of the persons she converses with, or would even wish they should be thought possessed of a virtue she is entirely destitute of herself. No; on the contrary, she will rather have recourse to all the wicked artifices she may be mistress of, to cast a shade over that brightness which would render her own deformity more conspicuous. But this

is not the worst danger to which an innocent person is exposed by keeping company with a bad woman. We are told, from an unquestionable authority, that it is hard to touch pitch without being defiled; and certainly there is nothing more evident, than that vice naturally loses great part of it's horrors by becoming familiar to the sight. The chaste heart, which shudders at the bare repetition of indecent actions, by accustoming itself to be a witness of them, ceases first to wonder, and by degrees to detest them; and though I will not be so uncharitable as to say, that the mind is always corrupted by such a communication, yet I will venture to affirm, that the manners will be so.

I know very well, that the timid modesty I would recommend, as the surest guardian of a virgin's honour, has for many years been exploded; and that since some foreign customs have unhappily been introduced among us, to be capable of blushing is looked upon, by those who pass for models of politeness, as an indication of the want both of wit and good-breeding. This audacity of behaviour being so much the mode, it is not a little difficult to distinguish between those who really pursue the dictates of a licentious inclination, and those who put on a shew of it, merely to comply with the example of others; and a person who judges of a woman by what he sees of her in publick, runs a very great risque of being mistaken. Often has my opinion been led astray in this point, even in regard of ladies with whom I was most intimately acquainted, and saw every day; nor did I ever dare to give a character of any one of them, till my Belt of Invisibility afforded me an opportunity of prying into the secrets of the alcove.

Corisca and Emilia are two celebrated beauties. They are almost equally followed and admired by the men, but neither of them were ever jealous or envious of the praises given to the other; and there was once so excessive a fondness between them, that they were scarce ever seen asunder. Corisca has been married some years; Emilia has not yet been prevailed upon to part with her liberty: but though there is this difference in their circumstances, there has been too much appearance upon exact similitude in their humours and constitutions: I say in appearance, for

I have since discovered that light and darkness are not, in fact, more widely distant.

Corisca, long before she became a wife, was looked upon as what they call a female rake. Some there were, however, who imputed what she did only to the too great vivacity of her humour, and would not believe her guilty of any real crime; but far the greater number were of a quite different opinion: and, indeed, the little regard she takes of her family since her marriage, the publick contempt with which she treats her husband, and the frequent quarrels she has with him in private, but too much justify the worst character that can be given either of her œconomy or her chastity. Yet, notwithstanding all this, there is a certain something in her air, her wit, and manner of behaviour, so engaging to both sexes, that she has always been, and still continues to be, constantly visited by persons not only of the best fortunes, but of the best reputations; who chuse rather to seem blind to her faults, than deny themselves the pleasure of her conversation. It is, beyond all dispute, a very great pity, that a woman so plentifully endowed by nature with every qualification to shew virtue in it's most amiable colours, should, through a strange depravity of principles and inclination, make use of all the fine talents she is mistress of only to varnish over the foul face of vice, and give a pleasing aspect to the deformity of sin and shame.

The beautiful person of Emilia, her sprightly wit, her good humour and affability, rendered her the darling of all who knew her. They beheld, with an infinity of concern, her intimacy with Corisca; and those who, either by proximity of blood, or a long acquaintance with her, thought themselves privileged to offer their advice, did it in the strongest terms, and spared no remonstrances that might prevail on her to break off so dangerous a communication; but she was deaf to all that could be said to her on this subject. It was her misfortune to become the mistress of her own actions at too early an age; what fortune she was possessed of was in her own hands; and as she was entirely independent on her friends, would not submit to be directed by them.

In justice to this young lady's character, however, I must say, and shall hereafter

hereafter prove, that there is a fund of honour and virtue in her soul sufficient to have made her look with contempt and detestation on the conduct of Corisca; and to have obliged her, if not to break off all conversation with her, at least not to appear with her in publick, or make one in any party of pleasure where she was engaged. But, alas! the seeds of those noble principles for a time lay dormant in her; choaked up with the natural levities of youth, and the modish excesses of the age, they had not power to shoot forth into action. Innocently wanton, and indolently gay, she saw not the danger to which she exposed her person and reputation, because she thought not of it, nor gave herself the pains to examine what snares might possibly be spread for her; but suffering herself to be continually hurried from one amusement to another, never considered or reflected on any thing farther than the present satisfaction.

I have been thus particular in describing the character and humour of Emilia, because in the course of my rambles I have found too many others of the same giddy bent, who, without the least propensity to ill, have heedlessly run into actions which have involved their whole future lives in dishonour. These have reason to pardon this digression, especially as it has not been tedious; and I shall now return to the adventure which occasioned it.

Among the many Invisible Visits which for a considerable time together I had made to the apartment of this celebrated Corisca, I happened to be there one morning when Favonius and Palamede were with her. The first of these gentlemen is of a very amorous inclination, and known to be what the world calls well with her; the other, though gay and lively as Mercury himself, has been restrained, either through want of inclination to her person, or his friendship to Favonius, from attempting to take any private liberties, and seldom visits her but in his company. The discourse they were engaged in, when I first broke in upon them, I found was on subjects of too trifling a nature for me to spread my Tablets for the reception of; so I shall make no repetition of any things which were said till the entrance of Emilia, who came in soon after. The first salutations were

no sooner over, than Corisca, taking her fondly by the hand, spoke thus—

Corisca. Dear creature, this is an excess of goodness in you to come thus early; I did not expect you till dinner-time.

Emilia. Indeed, my dear, I never waited on you with so ill a will, nor came on an errand so disagreeable to my inclination; for I have but just time to tell you, that I am deprived of the pleasure I proposed of passing the whole day with you.

Corisca. On what occasion?

Emilia. The most unlucky one that could have happened. An old aunt of mine has taken it into her head to quit her rookery and henhouse in the country, and come to stare and be stared at in town. She arrived last night, and sent me word she must needs see me this morning: decency obliges me to go; she is my godmother, and besides is pretty rich.

Corisca. But cannot you make some excuse to leave her as soon as you have paid your compliments? I shall have all the world here this afternoon, and would not have you absent upon any score.

Emilia. It cannot be avoided. She pretends to have a huge fondness for me, and I know will detain me, with a thousand impertinent declarations of it, till bed-time: so, my dear, adieu for this whole tedious day; to-morrow, I hope, will atone for this vexation.—Gentlemen, your servant.

In speaking these last words, she turned upon her heel, and ran out of the room; but not so hastily but that Palamede, with one stride, joined her at the door, and led her down stairs. In the mean time Corisca, looking on Favonius, said to him—

Corisca. I pity poor Emilia. The impertinent fondness of an old relation is almost as great a mortification as the saucy indifference of a young fellow one likes.

Favonius. The beautiful Corisca, I am sure, can never be in danger of experiencing the latter of these vexations.

To prove the sincerity of this assertion, he closed it with a strenuous embrace, which Corisca returned. There was time for no more; Palamede came back; and Favonius, with a smile, spoke in this manner—

Favonius.

Favonius. By the sparkle in your eyes, Palamede, I should imagine the piece of gallantry you have shewed to Emilia has been more than ordinarily well received.

Palamede. This, and all others I have yet had in my power to treat that lady with, have been too trifling to deserve much notice from her.

Favonius. Oh, every kind glance gives transport to a man in love!—You must know, Madam, I have just found out that Palamede is desperately in love with Emilia.

Corisca. Indeed!—And do you allow the charge, Palamede?

Palamede. Not altogether, Madam. I am not absolutely in love; but confess I think Emilia an extremely fine girl, and have had some very odd dreams on her account.

Corisca. What hinders you, then, from making your addresses to her?

Palamede. Why, faith, Madam, to confess the truth, I was afraid of not succeeding on the terms I wished to do; and as for marriage, the circumstances of my estate require I should make choice of a wife with a much larger fortune than Emilia is possessed of.

Favonius. You are perfectly in the right, Palamede. A good fortune with a wife is absolutely necessary for a man of pleasure, as it enables him to make handsome presents and entertainments to those women he may happen to like better.

Corisca. So, Palamede, you durst not ask Emilia the question, for fear of meeting with a rebuff from her over-scrupulous virtue?

Palamede. That is indeed the case, Madam.

Corisca. Then you are a fool. Not but I believe Emilia is perfectly innocent as yet; but what is innocence, what is virtue, what is honour, when opposed to love and inclination! Do you not know what Mrs. Behn, who must be allowed to be a perfect judge of nature in our sex, says upon this occasion?

‘Oh, cursed Honour! thou who first didst damn
‘A woman to the sin of shame!’

‘Honour! who taught her lovely eyes the art
‘To wound, and not to cure the heart;

‘With love to invite, but to forbid with
‘awe,

‘And to themselves prescribe a cruel law.

‘His chief attributes are pride and spite,
‘His pow’r is robbing lovers of delight.

‘Honour! that puts our words, that should
‘be free,

‘Into a set formality!

‘Thou base debaucher of the gen’rous
‘heart,

‘That teachest all our looks and actions
‘art.

‘What Love design’d a sacred gift,

‘What Nature made to be possess’d,

‘Mistaken Honour made a theft.

‘Thou foe to Pleasure, Nature’s worst dis-
‘ease!

‘Thou tyrant over mighty kings,

‘Be gone to princes palaces,

‘But let the humble swain go on,

‘In the blest paths of the first race of man,

‘That nearest were to gods allied,

‘And, form’d for love, disdain’d all other
‘pride.’

The emphatick accents and graceful manner with which Corisca pronounced these lines adding to the beauty of the poetry, struck so much upon the hearts of the two gentlemen, that they could not forbear clapping their hands, and crying out—‘Encore, encore, charming Corisca!’ On which she laughed heartily, and replied—

Corisca. I want none of these theatrical testimonies of approbation; I would only convince Palamede, from the unquestionable authority of our English Sappho, that when a woman loves, no considerations are of force to restrain her from acting up to the dictates of her passion.

Palamede. Aye, Madam, if I could flatter myself with the hopes of being loved by Emilia, I should have nothing to apprehend.

Corisca. I will not pretend to tell you that she is so much in love as not to be able to eat, drink, or sleep, for the thoughts of you; but I have heard her say a thousand times over, I believe, that you are, without exception, the prettiest fellow in the whole town; that you dress the best, and have something peculiarly agreeable in your air and manner of behaviour: and on the strength of this, and some other indications I have observed about her, I dare venture to affirm that you are far from being indifferent to her, and that she would be little less pleased than yourself with an opportunity of being entertained by you in private.

Palamede. Dear Madam, you make me the most transported man alive! But
by

by what means can such a thing be brought about? Some scheme must be laid for that purpose.

Corisca. Nothing more easy; I have it all in my head already; she will go any where with me; we shall be together to-morrow; you two shall come in as if by accident, and propose going to take the air on the other side of the water: there is a house the most commodiously situated that can be; good gardens, good wine, good every thing.—Favonius is well acquainted with the place.

Favonius. I suppose you mean that kept by Mrs. *****?

Corisca. The same. When we have been there some time, and it begins to draw near the hour proper to think of going home, you shall discharge the coach, and pretend the fellow got drunk and went away without your knowledge. There will be no possibility of procuring a vehicle to bring us to town, especially at night. Favonius must be content to do penance with me in loitering about the gardens, or in something or other, till morning, while you make the most of your time with Emilia.

Palamede. Excellent, my charming Machiavel! But how shall we prevail on Emilia to be separated from her dear Corisca?

Corisca. Leave that to my management; she shall suspect nothing of the matter, till she finds herself alone with you, and then it will be your business to make her satisfied with being so.

Palamede. Kind creature! where shall I find words to thank this compassion to a suffering lover?

Corisca. Never trouble yourself about thanks; good actions, they say, reward themselves.

Favonius. As for my part, I shall defer those acknowledgments which your excess of goodness demands from me, both on my own score and that of my friend, till to-morrow night, when they shall make part of that agreeable penance I am to perform.

This speech of Favonius paved the way for a conversation conformable enough to the characters of the persons engaged in it; but I am certain would not be well relished by that part of my readers which I am most ambitious of obliging: I shall therefore close the scene, as indeed I did soon after my Tablets, and quitted the apartments of this fair

libertine, in order to retire to my own, and contemplate at leisure on what I had seen and heard.

CHAP. II.

PRESENTS THE READER WITH THE CATASTROPHE OF AN ADVENTURE VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE BEGINNING MAY HAVE GIVEN HIM REASON TO EXPECT.

THOUGH I had thought myself too well acquainted with the principles and inclinations of Corisca, to be at all surprized at any act of licentiousness she could possibly be guilty of, yet I could not defend my senses from being seized with the extremest shock, on finding she could be base enough to condescend to become the instrument of others pleasures, and betray the innocence of a young lady for whom she had as much friendship as is consistent with a woman of her character—forgetting all this while what the good old poet, Mr. Philip Massenger, tells us on an occasion similar to this of Corisca and Emilia—

* Virtue and Vice in one sole point agree,
* Each would be glad all like themselves might be.

In ruminating very wisely, as I then imagined, on what Corisca had said to Palamede, I must confess I entertained suspicions not at all to the advantage of poor Emilia: I fancied that she had in reality confessed a passion for that gentleman; and Corisca, in forming this contrivance to bring about a private interview between them, had done nothing but what she was convinced in her own mind would be highly satisfactory to her fair friend. It was never my custom, however, to place an entire dependance on conjecture, whether my own or that of another person; so resolved to be as convinced as my Invisible inspection could make me. Accordingly the next day, in the afternoon, I girded on my precious Belt, and went to the house of Corisca. Emilia was not yet come; but just as I arrived I heard her give orders to refuse admittance to all of her own sex except that lady, and also to all those of the other except Favonius and Palamede.

As I doubted not but I should be able to fathom the whole truth of this affair, by the conversation that would pass between these two ladies while they believed themselves alone together, I was extremely impatient for the approach of Emilia, and equally rejoiced when I saw her enter. The first salutations they gave each other, were such as might be expected from persons who mutually professed so warm and tender a friendship. The subjects they afterwards talked upon were not of any consequence; not one word of Palamede nor the projected tour was mentioned; on which I absolved Emilia from all blame on this account, and was sorry I had ever wronged her. But the less room I had to condemn, the greater cause I had to pity her, and to detest the cruel plot contrived, and so near being put in execution against her virtue. But I had no time to indulge meditation; the gentlemen presently came in; the proposal, as agreed upon between them and Corisca, was immediately made; the ladies gave a ready assent; a hackney-coach was ordered to be called, and every one seemed equally on the wing to be gone.

The reader will now perhaps imagine, that it being easy to see into the end of this affair, there was no occasion for any farther enquiries in relation to it, and that curiosity had received it's utmost gratification; but I happened to be of a different way of thinking. I sincerely pitied Emilia, and could not help being desirous to see how she would resent the base artifice practised on her when she should discover it, and also how Corisca would conduct the plot she had contrived. It was no difficult matter for me to know the house they were going to, both by the description I had heard given of it the day before by Corisca, and also by what I had been told by other people concerning it's commodiousness for intrigue; so I no sooner found that a hackney-coach was ordered, than I hastily quitted the post I was in, made the best of my way to the place of rendezvous, got there before them, took up my stand at the entrance, saw them alight, and followed them into a well-furnished spacious room, to which they were ushered by a spruce waiter.

Wine and biscuits were immediately served up; and the company, after having refreshed themselves with this little regale, went to walk in the gardens,

which I found indeed very pleasant, well laid out into parterres and knots, and larger than I could have imagined. Favonius led Corisca, and Palamede had Emilia by the hand, who, during this promenade, took the opportunity of entertaining her with many tender speeches, but intermixed with nothing that the most chaste ear might not have listened to without calling a blush upon the face. I was sorry, however, to observe that she received what he said with a certain languishment in her eyes, which emboldened him to go on, and made me fear that he had indeed a secret ascendancy over her incautious, unsuspecting heart.

On their return into the house, a table was spread with every thing that could excite the appetite or exhilarate the spirits. The cheerfulness and good humour of the guests gave a double relish to the repast; wit and sparkling Champagne crowned the board; and though the ladies allayed the too great potency of the one by the assistance of water, yet the other flowed with no less strength and vigour. After some hours had been passed in the height of gaiety, Corisca on a sudden looked upon her watch, and assuming a more serious air than she was accustomed to wear, told the company that it was near one o'clock, and they must think of departing for London. To which Favonius replied—

Favonius. Among all the ridiculous things mankind was ever guilty of, I know none more so than the having set their wits to work to invent a machine, and then submitting to be governed by it.

Corisca. There are many other laws, as well as this, by which the silly world have bound themselves to go contrary to the primitive rules of nature and inclination, indulging by stealth only those pleasures which they were born freely to enjoy: but, however, all these customs, disagreeable as they are to people of real wit and spirit, must in some measure be complied with, or the stupid vulgar would presently accuse us of irregularity and indecency.

Palamede. I look upon every one here, Madam, to be above the censures of the vulgar, yet I will not pretend to enter into any arguments on that head; and dare answer for Favonius, as well as for myself, that he would not presume to detain you a moment beyond the time you think proper to go.

Emilia.

Emilia. Indeed, gentlemen, I think, and I believe Corisca does so too, that to stay any longer at this time would rather diminish than add to the satisfaction we have hitherto enjoyed.

Favonius. After such a declaration, Madam, any farther pressures to the contrary on our part, might justly be looked upon as impertinent and troublesome; it is certainly your province to command, ours implicitly to obey.

In speaking these last words, he went out of the room with Palamede, as it might be supposed to discharge the reckoning of the house; but in a few minutes returned, and, with a seeming concern in their faces, said, that the coachman, either by having got drunk or mistaking his orders, had gone away soon after he had set them down: on which Corisca affected to be extremely surprized, and Emilia being really so, they both cried out at the same time—

Corisca. This is the oddest accident sure that ever happened!

Emilia. Bless me! which way shall we get home?

Palamede. As for going home, Madam, it is a thing quite out of the question: we have enquired, and there is no possibility of procuring either coach, chariot, post-chaise, or any sort of carriage whatever, till the morning breaks; so, ladies, you must content yourselves with being our guests for the remainder of the night.

Corisca. Well, since it is so, we must e'en make a virtue of necessity, and divert ourselves as well as we can.

Palamede. It would be an unpardonable vanity in us, Madam, to imagine that any thing in our conversation could compensate for the want of your repose; we will therefore order a bed to be got ready for you two ladies, while Favonius and myself watch the approach of day, in order to provide a vehicle for carrying us to town.

Corisca. No, no, by no means, we will all share the same fate; it would be strange indeed, if four people of taste and spirit could not find some way to amuse each other for the space of one night.

While she was speaking, a concert of flutes, a hautboy, a double curtal, and some other wind-musick, on a sudden saluted their ears; on which she cried out—

Corisca. Hark! musick! if it continues, it will very well atone for the loss of a few hours sleep.

Emilia. Nothing ever happened so fortunately for me; I love musick as I love my life, especially of this sort.

In speaking this, she ran hastily to the window and threw up the sash, in order to hear the several instruments more distinctly. Palamede followed, and they both seemed absorbed in a most profound attention; which Favonius and Corisca observing, took that opportunity of passing softly behind them, and slipped out of the room. Emilia turning her head presently after, with a design, as I suppose, to say something either to the one or the other, was surprized at seeing neither of them there, and cried out to Palamede—

Emilia. Bless me! what is become of Favonius and Corisca?

Palamede. I know not, Madam; perhaps they are gone down into the garden, to be nearer to the musick, which seems to proceed from the lower end of the walk.

Emilia. Very likely; they might have told us, however; but since it is so, we will follow them.

Palamede. With all my heart, Madam; but first permit me to reveal a secret to you which you ought to be told, and my breast has long laboured with an impatience of discovering.

Emilia. A secret! What secret can you have with me, that would be worth losing one note of this musick to listen to?

Palamede. I hope you will be of another opinion, Madam, when I shall tell you that the whole happiness of my future life, and even my soul's eternal peace, depends upon it.

Emilia. You may tell me what you will, but I shall believe nothing of the matter; so let us rejoin our friends.

It is not so much by what people say, as by the manner in which they deliver themselves, that the sincerity of their words may be guessed at; and I was heartily glad to find, both by the looks of Emilia and the tone of her voice, that she indeed had more inclination to do as she had proposed, than to stay and suffer herself to be entertained by Palamede in the way she might easily perceive he was about to do it. The discreet intentions of this young lady, however, could avail her but little in her present situation; Palamede got between her and the door as she was endeavouring to go out, and throwing himself upon his knees before her, and at the same time catching fast hold of both her hands, said to her—

Palamede.

Palamede. No, charming Emilia! I have not so long languished for an opportunity like this to let it now escape me! you must, you shall hear me. By Heaven I love you!—love you to the most raging height the passion can inspire! For many, many tedious weeks, you have been the only object of my nightly visions and waking thoughts; and—

He was going on, but Emilia interrupted him by replying in these terms, accompanied with an air full of resentment and confusion—

Emilia. Fye, Palamede, this raillery is impertinent and insipid, and what I could not have expected to be treated with by a person who has the character of good sense and breeding.

Palamede. Cruelly urged! Oh, could you see into my heart, you would find it all devoted to you! devoted to you with a tenderness so perfect as can be equalled by nothing but the charms that have subdued it. Frown not, adorable Emilia, nor struggle to get loose; for, by all my hopes, never will I quit the grasp I have taken of you, nor rise from the posture I am in, till I have convinced you of the sincerity, as well as ardency, of the flame you have kindled in me!

Emilia. Sir, this nocturnal declaration is little consistent with that respect which is always the attendant of an honourable passion. If you had, indeed, any thoughts of me of the nature you pretend, I am no recluse, and you might have found a more proper season to acquaint me with them.

Palamede. The passion I am enflamed with, is not of a nature to submit to the dull forms observed by vulgar lovers. Besides, what season can be more fit for love than night, the friend of love? Turn your eyes towards the window, and behold the silver moon, with all the thousand twinkling stars! see how sweet, how mild they shine! with what benevolent aspects they dart their rays upon us! Listen to the melodious sounds you just now praised! Will not all these soften your soul, melt you into pity, and make you think such love as mine deserves some recompence?

Emilia. I'll hear no more; unhand me, Sir, and give me liberty to seek our friends; or be assured my cries shall raise the house.

He then let go her hands, and rose from the posture he had been in; but still

kept his back close against the door, while with half a smile he replied to what she had said in this manner—

Palamede. Madam, you are obeyed in part; and if I acquiesce to every thing you demand, it is not to be imagined you would be one jot less in my power than now. Our friends are too deeply engaged with each other to suffer themselves to be interrupted; and as to the people of the house, they know their distance, and are always extremely deaf on these occasions.

On hearing him speak thus, she burst into a flood of tears, and throwing herself into a chair, cried out—

Emilia. O Heavens! is this possible! Can Corisca be so vile! Am I betrayed! basely given up by her to infamy and ruin!

On hearing her make this exclamation, he left the place where he had been standing, and seated himself near her; then taking one of her hands, and pressing it tenderly to his lips, spoke to this effect—

Palamede. Not so, my angel! By Heaven, the transactions of this night shall be for ever a sacred and inviolable secret! not even Favonius nor Corisca shall be acquainted with it if you desire the contrary: I know they will laugh at me; but no matter, I can bear all that, and much more, to comply with the least request made by my dear Emilia. O, then, be kind, and bless my longing wishes! let no reluctance damp the coming joys, but yield to share the happiness you give!

The consternation of Emilia, on finding she was exposed to the danger she now was in, by the very woman whom she most had loved, and most believed her friend, had thrown her into so profound a reverie, that I much question whether she heard any part of what Palamede had lately been speaking to her; till closing his protestations with a strenuous embrace, she started up, broke from him, and looking wildly round the room, she espied two swords, which Favonius and Palamede had plucked off on their entrance, and put in a window; she snatched up one of them, and drawing it out of the scabbard in an instant, held the point to her breast, saying at the same time—

Emilia. Here is at least a refuge from dishonour! That base woman, who thought to make me as vile as I now find she is herself, shall meet with a disappointment she perhaps does not expect.

If you offer to approach me, or advance one step beyond the spot you stand upon, this goes into my heart.

The amazement, the shock, the confusion Palamede was in at this action, is altogether impossible to describe: her words, her looks, her voice, convincing him she was indeed in earnest, he remained speechless, without motion, his eyes fixed on her in a kind of stupid stare, and seemed like one transfixed with thunder; at length, recovering himself a little, he said to her in a faltering voice—

Palamede. For Heaven's sake, Madam, wound not thus my soul by the sight of your despair! You have no cause. It is certain that I long have loved you, but never had a thought of seducing your innocence. The plot to bring you hither was not of my contriving. 'Tis true I came into it, as where is the man who would not? But be assured I am no ravisher, nor capable of doing my pleasure to brutal violence: Oh, therefore, throw aside that cruel weapon, or turn the point on me, and if I make the least attempt to offend your modesty, bury it to the hilt within my bosom.

Emilia. Sir, I once looked upon you as a man of honour, and should rejoice to find you could redeem yourself in my opinion.

Palamede. By all that's sacred, not the utmost gratification of my loosest wishes could have given me half the joy as now, to prove myself not wholly unworthy the esteem of such exalted virtue. Charming Emilia! perfect in mind as well as form! in both angelic! behold me your convert! The love I had for you is now rarified into adoration! Your virtue, like chemists gold, turns all into itself, and leaves no grosser particles behind! Forgive what is past, and never—never more will I presume to entertain you with discourses less chaste and pure than your own virgin thoughts!

Emilia. May I believe this penitence sincere?

Palamede. You may, by Heaven! and when I relapse into my former crimes, may infamy, diseases, the contempt of the whole world, your eternal hatred, and every other curse, fall on me!

Emilia. Then find some way, if possible, to take me immediately from this place, and conduct me safe to my own apartment.

Palamede. My readiness to obey you,

Madam, I hope, will prove the integrity of my present intentions, and be some atonement for the past. It is my happiness to have it in my power to do what you require with much more ease than you imagine; you shall no longer, beautiful Emilia! be imposed upon: the coachman, whom we pretended had left us, has only put up at an inn not above forty yards distant from this house; I suppose he may be gone to bed by this time, as we told him we should not return to London till the morning; but I will send and have him roused.

He had scarce made an end of speaking these words, when he rang the bell, and a waiter coming presently up, he gave him the necessary orders for fulfilling the promise he had just given to Emilia: on which that young lady, with the utmost satisfaction in her voice and eyes, cried out—

—This is truly honourable indeed, and worthy of yourself. *Emilia.* Something which that instant started into the mind of Palamede, hindered him from making any answer, or even, perhaps, from hearing what she said: he rang the bell a second time with all his force, and called for pen, ink and paper; which being brought, he told Emilia that decency and good manners would not suffer him to depart without taking some notice of the occasion to Favonius, with whom he had always lived in a perfect good understanding, and therefore entreated her permission to write a few lines to that gentleman. The request was too reasonable not to be complied with, and he sat down and dictated the following epistle—

MY DEAR FRIEND,
 'T' HING I have happened very differently from what I was made to expect in regard to Emilia: in fine, she is not a woman, but an angel. As such I shall always esteem her, and think it my glory to obey every command she is pleased to lay upon me: the first she has honoured me with, is to remove her hence, and conduct her to her own apartment, which I am just now about to do. I have no opportunity to discharge the musick or the expences of the house, so beg you will take the whole upon you, and meet me to-morrow evening at Braund's, where we will sup together, and settle that affair. Make what compliments

A a and

and excuses you shall think proper for me to Corisca; and believe me, yours, &c.

‘PALAMEDE.’

While Palamede was thus employed, it also came into Emilia's head to let Corisca know some part of the resentment she had conceived against her: accordingly she took another pen out of the standish, and expressed herself in these terms—

‘MADAM,

‘WHAT the united report of all who know you could never have made me believe, your behaviour this night has not only convinced me of, but also that the tongue of malice can find nothing wherewith to aggravate your real guilt. Was it not enough, O most ungenerous woman! to sink your own honour and reputation in eternal infamy, but you must also endeavour to drag others into perdition with you! Know, to your confusion, that I happily escaped the snare you had laid for me; and shall reap this benefit by my late danger, as to avoid the company of a person whom to preserve an acquaintance with must in the end have been the ruin of my character, if not of my virtue; for, be assured, I shall henceforward be as careful to shun your presence, as ever I was eager to come into it. Here ceases all farther intercourse between us. May the disappointment of your base designs on me, serve as a warning to you not to attempt the like on any other equally inadvertent and incautious as the much deceived

‘EMILIA.’

They had just finished, and made up the above billets, when the waiter returned, and told Palamede that he had, though not without some difficulty, prevailed on the coachman to rise; and that, before he left the inn, he had seen him go into the stable to bring out the horses. Palamede then gave him the letter he had wrote to Favonius, saying—‘Be sure you deliver this to the gentleman who came with us as soon as he shall be stirring, and let him know I shall send the coach back in the morning.’ Emilia also put into his hands her epistle to Corisca, with these words—

‘And let the lady know I left this for her.’ The fellow replied, that they might depend he would be punctual in discharging the commission they entrusted him with, and then withdrew.

Finding my Crystalline Tablets were now overcharged, I was obliged to shut them up; so can relate no farther particulars of what conversation passed between Palamede and Emilia during the small time they waited for the coach to carry them away; and can only say in general, that the greatest reserve and distance was observed on both sides. Emilia, though now perfectly satisfied with the contrition of Palamede, thought it would be imprudent to appear too gay; and Palamede, fearful to renew her apprehensions, behaved to her with all the solemnity of a Chinese mandarin.

On their going down, they were met at the bottom of the stairs by the woman who kept this tavern, or rather brothel; who ushering in what she had to say with a low curtsy, told Emilia, that she flattered herself with the expectation of her sleeping there that night, and hoped nothing disagreeable had happened to occasion her departure at so unseasonable an hour; adding, that she should never forgive herself if any thing in her house had disobliged so sweet a young lady. Emilia answered this fawning speech only with a look of contempt; but Palamede told her she need be under no concern on that score; the lady had no objections to her house, but chose never to sleep out of her own apartment. No more was said; they went into the coach, and I followed on foot; for I had not curiosity enough to make me stay the remainder of the night in that place, for no other purpose than to see how Favonius and Corisca would behave on being told that Palamede and Emilia were gone, and receiving the epistles that gentleman and lady had left for them. I had a long walk home, but my Invisibleness secured me from the danger of any insults; and the satisfaction that rose in my mind, on the noble conquest virtue had gained over vice, made the way seem much less tedious.

A few days after I was informed, by the report of the town, that Palamede made his publick addresses to Emilia. Being willing to be better convinced of the truth of this matter, I made several visits to Emilia's apartment, and found that in fact the thing was as I had been told.

told. Palamede, who really loved Emilia much more than perhaps he was sensible of himself, before this proof she had given him of her virtue, got over that objection which the scantiness of her fortune had before laid in his way; and Emilia, who had liked him as much as Corisca had said she did, gave all the encouragement he could wish to his honourable passion. I look upon the affair to be now in a manner concluded on, and that a very short time will consummate their mutual wishes; a catastrophe which I doubt not but every generous reader will heartily rejoice at as well as myself.

Favonius, who is in reality a man of strict honour and good principles, though somewhat too sanguine in his amours, still continues his intimacy with Palamede, and highly applauds his conversion in favour of the fair inspirer of his honourable flame. Corisca bites her lips whenever the name of Emilia is mentioned, and endeavours all she can to traduce that virtue which she had not the power to destroy: but all she says on that score serves only to shew more plainly her own bad heart; and Emilia, by refraining all conversation with her, has entirely regained that esteem and good opinion which she had well nigh lost.

CHAP. III.

CONTAINS THE REHEARSAL OF A CONVERSATION WHICH THE AUTHOR ACCIDENTALLY HAPPENED TO BE WITNESS OF, AND LOOKS UPON HIMSELF AS BOUND BY AN INDISPENSABLE OBLIGATION TO MAKE PUBLIC; THOUGH PERFECTLY CONSCIOUS, FROM HIS OBSERVATIONS OF MANKIND, THAT THERE ARE MANY OF HIS READERS WHO WILL LABOUR ALL THEY CAN TO BRING THESE PAGES INTO DISCREDIT.

ONE whom I shall always rank among the number of our best English authors, tells us, in a justly esteemed poem, that—

* Wisdom is still to sloth too great a slave;
* None are so busy as the fool and knave.*

How widely different are the pictures drawn of a person whose prudence makes

him act and talk with circumspection and reserve! How various are the representations made of him! He has almost as many characters as there are speakers of him; by the abundance one hears of him the judgment is distracted, and there is no forming a right idea of what he truly is. One can go into no company without hearing some mention made of Lord Honorius, yet one shall seldom find any two people agree in their opinion concerning him, either as to his abilities or principles, whether in religious, moral, or political matters. He is no follower of the court, yet does not totally avoid going thither. He professes himself a member of the established church, yet converses freely with those of different persuasions. He listens attentively to the arguments urged by persons of all parties and all sects, without offering any of his own, or giving his opinion which are wrong or which are right.

For this reason all the zealots, both in religion and politics, brand him with lukewarmness, and say he is a man of an uncertain way of thinking, and has no settled principle of acting. Some few there are who applaud his moderation, but many more who look upon it as a piece of low cunning, thereby to cover some latent designs he has within his bosom; but of what nature these are, I have heard many warm disputes about. Some will needs have him in the interest of the Pretender, and others that he is secretly a tool of the ministry. Some have confidently averred, that they have seen a white rose carried into his house on the tenth of June; and others, that he has worn a yellow waistcoat on the birth-day of his present Majesty; as if an innocent flower, or the colour of a piece of silk, were sufficient tokens to shew the wishes of the wearer's heart.

As to his oeconomy in private life, he is not at all expensive in dress, equipage, or the furniture of his house; chusing rather to appear below his rank, than in any particular to exceed it. This is frequently attributed to his covetousness, while more favourable judges suppose it to be owing to his contempt of the modish fopperies of the age. He partakes of all the pleasures of the town, but never pursues them to an excess, or with eagerness. The graver sort of people ascribe this to his discretion, and the more gay to want of spirit and coldness of constitution.

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Thus apt are we to form a vain judgment on things we know nothing of. The heart of man is incomprehensible, unless discovered by himself in some glaring proof either of virtue or vice: he first he may not have an opportunity to set forth in any conspicuous light, and the latter he may have artifice and hypocrisy enough to gild over and conceal. How impossible, then, is it to be certain to which of these he is in reality devoted!

Among the variety of descriptions and reports in relation to Lord Honorius, I found, notwithstanding, that it was agreed on by all hands, that though he would not suffer himself to be imposed upon by his tradesmen, yet he always took care their bills should be paid with the utmost exactness and punctuality, and that he never dealt with foreigners. These articles, however insignificant they may seem to some of those who call themselves the polite world, I confess gave me such an idea both of his prudence and justice, as made me immediately join with those who spoke the greatest things in his praise in other respects; but being desirous of penetrating more deeply into the reality of this nobleman's disposition, I resolved to try how my Invisibilityship would serve that end, and accordingly made a visit one morning at his house.

I passed through several neat rooms, the furniture of which was rich, and befitting the dignity and fortune of the owner, but had nothing of gaudiness in it. At last I found the person I went to seek; he was in a closet within his dressing-room, and had a book in his hand. I was curious to see what was the subject of his meditations; and, looking over his shoulder, perceived it was the poems of our English Pindar, the celebrated Mr. Cowley. The page he was employed in on my entrance contained, among others, these lines—

O fountains! when in you shall I,
Eas'd of unpeaceful thoughts, myself espy!
O fields! O woods! when shall I be made
The happy tenant of your shade!
Here's the spring-head of pleasure's flood,
Where all the riches lie,
That she has coin'd and stamp'd for good,
To charm the mind as well as eye.
Pride and ambition here,
Only in far-fetch'd metaphors appear;
Here's nought but winds can hurtful mur-
murs scatter,
And nought but echo flatter.

The gods, when they descended hither
From heaven, did always chuse their way;
And therefore we may boldly say,
"That is the way, too, thither."

When he came to this part of the poem, he stopped, and cried out with the greatest emphasis—'Charming, inimitable Cow-
ley! how just, how truly delicate, are
all thy notions, and how widely dif-
ferent from those of the age I have the
misfortune to live in! If one may
form a judgment, as sure one may, by
the writings of seventy or eighty years
ago, the genius of Britain was far un-
like what it appears at present.'

He had scarce finished this exclama-
tion, when a servant opened the door,
and told him that Sir Whimsy Brain-
sick was come to wait upon him; on
which he laid aside the book, and went
into the next chamber to receive his
guest. After giving and returning the
customary salutations of the morning,
and having seated themselves, the fol-
lowing dialogue ensued between them—

Honorius. It is a wonder to see you
dressed and abroad thus early, Sir
Whimsy; I think you are commonly
in your first sleep after this time.

Sir Whimsy. Aye, my lord; but
pleasure must on some occasions give
way to business. I have vast affairs upon
my hands at present. I only snatched
a moment to take leave of your lordship,
and two hours hence shall set out for
the country.

Honorius. On your election, I sup-
pose?

Sir Whimsy. No, no; my Lord
Triffli Triffli has secured me a bo-
rough, without my taking the trouble
of ever going near it. My business, at
present, is down at *****, where I
have a considerable estate, and, I believe,
a pretty good interest; and I have en-
gaged myself to strain both, as far as
they will go, in favour of Sir Crafty
Shallowbuggen.

Honorius. Sir Crafty Shallowbug-
gen! What, then, has Mr. Worthy, the
present member, declined standing?

Sir Whimsy. No, no, my lord, he
has not declined; but we are resolved
to have him out, at any rate.

Honorius. I would not have you de-
ceive yourself, Sir Whimsy. Mr.
Worthy is a gentleman who, I am told,
is highly esteemed by his constituents;
and you may be at a great deal of ex-
pence to oppose him, to no purpose.

Sir Whimsy.

Sir Whimsy. As to the expence, I don't doubt but it will be made up to me some way or other. I have my eye upon a place; and, I can tell you, am as good as promised either that or a ribband.

Honorius. The character I have heard of Mr. Worthy makes me sorry so powerful an opposition should be set on foot against him.

Sir Whimsy. He has been stubborn, my lord, very stubborn; has voted against the Jew and Clandestine Marriage bills; and it is not fit the ministry should be affronted. Your lordship, I suppose, is a friend to the ministry?

Honorius. Sir, I never gave any man reason to believe I was the contrary.

Sir Whimsy. No, no, your lordship is too wise. Those who are friends to the ministry, are friends to themselves. For my own part, if it were not to oblige them, I would not give two-pence who had the election at ***** or any where else. But I must beg your lordship's pardon; I have a thousand things to dispatch; and would not be waited for by four or five gentlemen who accompany me on the same expedition; so your lordship's most obedient.

Honorius. Yours, Sir Whimsy. I wish you a good journey.

With these words they parted. Lord Honorius saw him to the top of the staircase, and then turned back to his closet, saying to himself as he went—'What a wild world is this! How do men toil to bring infamy on themselves, and entail certain ruin on their posterity!'

As I thought, by the little sample I had seen, that it was now in my power to make a better judgment of the sentiments of this nobleman than by all I had heard from others, I was following Sir Whimsy down stairs; but on hearing some debate between a plain, honest-looking countryman, and a spruce footman, who, as I found afterwards, had been but lately taken into my lord's service, I stopped short to listen to the occasion. I soon perceived that the countryman was desirous of speaking to his lordship; and the fellow, judging by appearances, thought it too great a presumption, and would fain have turned him from the door; but the rascall was not so easily repulsed as the other had

imagined. The first words I could hear distinctly were as follow—

Footman. I tell you, friend, I know not whether my lord is at home or not; or, if he is, whether he pleases to be seen; but if you let me know what business you have with him, and from whom you came, I will take care his lordship shall be informed, and you may have your answer to-morrow.

Countryman. Goodluck, Mr. Skipjack, who are you? My lord is not used to have such malapert fellows about him. But if I must not see my lord, pray let me speak to Mr. Downright, the gentleman that dresses and waits upon him; he knows me well enough, and will give me a better answer.

The footman then vouchsafed to call the person he mentioned, and the countryman had the satisfaction to find himself well received. Mr. Downright shook him cordially by the hand, told him he was glad to see him in London, and asked him what business had brought him hither. To which the other replied—

Countryman. In good troth I did not come upon pleasure; I have business, very great business, with my lord, and would fain speak to him, if so be I may have liberty to come into his presence, as you know, Mr. Downright; I have done many a good time in the country; but that Mr. Finikin there, with his pig-tail wig, stands as it were like a mud-wall to keep every body off the house.

Mr. Downright. Oh, he did not know you, Mr. Goodacre; and besides, he has lived in families where nobody without a coach or chair is admitted. But I will acquaint my lord you are here; he is alone, and I am sure will see you.

Countryman. Thank you, Mr. Downright. It is well there are some civil people in this same town.

Mr. Downright then went on his message: the footman looked very sheepish, and sneaked away; while the countryman strutted about the hall as great as an emperor, till the valet returned, and desired him to walk up. As I took Mr. Goodacre for one of my lord's tenants, and imagined he was only come on the score of renewing a lease, or some other country affairs relating to himself; which I had no manner of curiosity to pry into, I was in some debate within myself whether I should

should stay, or go directly out of the house, the door being then open; but a certain impulse, the meaning of which I cannot account for, swayed me to pursue my first thought, and I turned back and accompanied him into the presence of my lord, from whom he met with a reception not commonly given by persons of quality to a man of his plain appearance, except on particular occasions. His lordship made him sit down in a chair very near himself, and, with a smiling countenance, and the greatest affability in his voice and air, told him, he was glad to see him look so well and hearty; that he hoped his wife and family enjoyed the same share of good health; and then asked what business had brought him up to London. To the former part of these obliging speeches he only answered with several low bows, but to the latter replied in these terms—

Goodacre. Why, my lord, your lordship knows we are going to have a new parliament, and belike there will be a great bustle all over the kingdom about elections; and no wonder if there be; every one makes us such fair promises when they come to ask us for our votes, that it is a hard matter to know which we can most depend upon. We have been served basely, very basely, by some of our representatives, and it behoves us to be very cautious for the future.

Honorius. Very true, Mr. Goodacre, it does so indeed; and I hope the nation will think so.

Goodacre. Now, as to our borough, no man could make finer speeches to us, or pretend he had our interest more at heart, than Squire Earnly, before he was chosen; yet he no sooner got into the House, than he shewed he did not care a straw for us, laughed at all our petitions and remonstrances, and, I am told, made a merit of it to the ministry.

Honorius. I am afraid there are too many who have done so. Does the same gentleman set up again?

Goodacre. No, my lord; he would have no chance for it if he did; we know him too well, he sees that well enough. But it is thought, however, that he will get in for some place or other.

Honorius. Nothing more likely. But do you hear who intends to offer him, self in his stead?

Goodacre. Yes, my lord; great interest is already making for one Captain Sashbright. He is as fine a person, in-

deed, as the sun shines upon, but we know nothing of him. He is recommended by Sir Courtly Jobber, and has brought a power of money down with him. They went together in Sir Courtly's coach to ***** fair, bought a many things, and gave them to every body about them. Guineas and broad pieces fly about like hail; any one, almost, may have them for picking up.

Honorius. So then he may easily carry it, I suppose?

Goodacre. I cannot tell that, my lord. There was a numerous meeting at the Rose about a fortnight ago, and Squire Wellwood, of the Green, was put in nomination. His family has been settled for a long time at *****; he lives most part in the country, does a great deal of good among the poor, and is mainly beloved.

Honorius. I know him, Mr. Goodacre; he is certainly a very worthy gentleman.

Goodacre. Aye, my lord, he would have it all to nothing, if it was not for one consideration.

Honorius. What is that?

Goodacre. The captain has promised that, if he gets his election, he will procure an act of parliament for a new road to be cut, at the government's expence, from ***** to *****; which your lordship knows would be a great advantage to our market.

Honorius. A very great one, indeed.

Goodacre. Aye, my lord, if we were sure it would be done; but there lies the query. Some people will promise any thing to gain their point, and never think of it afterwards. We all know Squire Wellwood to be a noble gentleman, and so may Captain Sashbright too; he may, or he may not. Now we are strangely divided in our opinions, whether we ought to leave the certain good for the uncertain better, and have at length resolved to be decided by your lordship.

Honorius. By me!

Goodacre. Yes, my lord. We know your lordship to be a wise man, and a true lover of your country.

Honorius. I have always thought, Mr. Goodacre, that to meddle in these things would prove me deserving neither of the one nor the other of the epithets you give me. Every elector ought to give his vote according to the dictates of his conscience, and not suffer himself to be

be swayed by any interest or motive whatever; and for a nobleman, or other person of distinction, to attempt, either by menaces or cajolings, to make them act to the contrary, appears to me to be the most gross encroachment on liberty that can be offered.

Goodacre. But here the case is widely different, my lord.

Honorius. I grant it is. You desire my advice as a friend, not submit to be governed by me as a director; it would therefore be ungenerous, and even cruel, in me, to suffer you to be deluded by false pretences, when it is so easily in my power to put you upon your guard against them. In the first place, you ought to consider that Captain Sash-bright, whatever his character may otherwise be, is an officer in the army; and, as such, it is his interest to promote the continuance of a standing army, and consequently of those taxes which are necessary for the support of it. In the second, Sir Courtly Jobber, who it seems is the person who recommends him, has for a long time, to my certain knowledge, been an agent for the ministry, and is indebted for his title, and the best part of the estate he is in possession of, merely to the good services he has rendered them.

Goodacre. Aye, marry, these things are worth thinking of indeed! So I suppose, my lord, the money he so plentifully throws about is none of his own?

Honorius. Not a doyt; he will be reimbursed with interest.

Goodacre. And yet I know not, my lord, but there may be some among us foolish enough to be inveigled by this bait. Alackaday! we country people are ignorant of such practices; we little think what the great folks in town are doing; and a many there are that would not believe a word of it without good authority. Oh, I wish your lordship were down at Egum Hall at this critical juncture!

Honorius. I will be there, Mr. Goodacre, in spite of the aversion I have always had to appear at elections, or to distinguish myself on any occasion. My love to the place which gave me birth, and good-will to my countrymen, shall overbalance all other considerations. I will do all I can to strengthen the weak eyes which are in danger of being dazzled with Sir Courtly's gold, and shew

them the false lustre of his fleeting promises.

Goodacre. Heaven bless your lordship!—A noble resolution!

Honorius. When do you return, Mr. Goodacre?

Goodacre. I shall lie but this one night in town, my lord, and set out betime tomorrow morning.

Honorius. I will not be two days behind you: in the mean time, you may tell them what I say.

Goodacre. It will be joyful news to some.

There passed no farther conversation between them; the honest countryman rose up to take his leave, full of transport at the success of his negociation; but Lord Honorius would not permit him to depart, till he had rung the bell for Mr. Downright, and given orders that he should be made welcome to the best entertainment the house afforded. I left him to accept the invitation, and returned to my apartment, well satisfied in my mind that I was now enabled to form a right judgment of this nobleman's principles and disposition.

CHAP. IV.

PRESENTS THE READER WITH THE
DETAIL OF A VERY REMARKABLE
INCIDENT; WHICH, I BELIEVE,
IF CONSIDERED WITH A DUE AT-
TENTION, THERE ARE BUT FEW
PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY OF THE
FAIR-SEX, WHO WILL NOT FIND
THEMSELVES ENABLED TO BE-
COME BETTER MEMBERS OF SO-
CIETY BY HAVING PERUSED.

A Certain sacred writer tell us, that the tongue is an unruly member, and preaches much concerning the government of it; but I dare not presume to insist too much on his authority, as he has been, with others of his cotemporaries, pretty much exploded; and I might be looked upon, by my polite readers, as a very old-fashioned, silly fellow, to make any mention of him. But I may venture, without running the risque of being read with a hoarse-laugh, to quote the words of another very great and learned person of a more modern date, who says, that the tongue is the most

most dangerous of all weapons; that it is capable of destroying all peace, all love, all harmony, in the world; of sowing dissensions among families; of disuniting the hearts of the dearest friends and relations; of ruining the reputation and fortune of whomsoever it is levelled against; and that even murders and the worst of mischiefs may be occasioned by it.

That the tongue, when it becomes the instrument of a malicious heart, carries a thousand daggers in it, is a truth which the observation of every one evinces. But this is not all: public abuse or private scandal, defamation and detraction, are not the only vices of the tongue; an unguarded word is frequently productive of the most unhappy consequences; it wounds, as it were, by chance-medley, and a person may be stabbed in the most tender part without any intention in the giver of the blow. A talkative disposition, or, in other words, a passion for repeating every thing one sees and hears, or even guesses at, is extremely dangerous to society; and though it is a foible proceeding rather from levity than ill-nature, sometimes produces the same effects. Those guilty of it, perhaps, may mean no hurt; but, alas! they consider not how far the person to whom they are speaking may be interested in the report they make, and that what they imagine of no moment may stab him to the quick. Nothing is more common than for people to hurt thus at random; and, by their rashness, to occasion accidents, which, if they foresaw, they would be most careful to prevent. As a late poet emphatically enough expresses it—

‘ Thinking to shoot my arrow o’er the
‘ house,
‘ I have kill’d my brother.’

But this inadvertency, as great a weakness as it doubtless is, has in it somewhat yet more excusable than to reveal a secret which we are conscious must give the hearer pain. I confess that this is sometimes done through good-will; but then it is a very mistaken good-will in many cases. If I know a person sustains an injury, and has it in his power to redress the grievance, it is certainly my duty to acquaint him with it; but when the evil is without a remedy, it is infinitely more kind to suffer him to re-

main in ignorance. To be well deceived, is almost equal to not being deceived at all: our happiness consists in the imagination of it; and if we firmly believe ourselves possessed of what we wish, it is the same thing as being so in reality. How cruel is it, then, for any one to draw back the friendly curtain that hides ill-fortune from us, and compel us to behold our wretchedness! Every one who is thus unhappily undeceived, may cry out with Bellamira, in the play—

‘ Ah, cruel friend!
‘ Why didst thou wake me from my dream
‘ of bliss!
‘ Why bring me from that scene of fancied
‘ joy,
‘ To one of real anguish, horror, and de-
‘ spair!’

Many unhappy instances of these well-meant ill offices have come to my knowledge since I was in possession of the gift of invisibility; but I shall recite only one of them, which, as it is a very late transaction, and but few people know the real truth of, is at present a matter of much speculation among those who are any way acquainted with the parties concerned, or have even heard their names.

Meroveus and Deidamia were an extreme happy pair; the railers against marriage could find nothing in the conduct of either of them to countenance any sarcasms on that state. The most tender affection had been the chief, if not the sole motive of the union between them; and the secure and uninterrupted possession of each other, instead of diminishing, seemed rather to increase their mutual ardour, and their first bridal fondness appeared in their behaviour after having served a more than seven years apprenticeship to Hymen. Yet how, on a sudden, have we seen all this sweet serenity turned into storms and tempests! Meroveus and Deidamia, who it was thought could not have lived a single week out of each other’s presence, are now parted; according to all probability, parted to meet no more in love.

Besides the many great accomplishments which justified the affection they so long had towards each other, both of them were accounted persons of an excellent understanding and solid sense. Nothing, therefore, could have more
amazed

amazed the world, than that they should come to this open rupture; even though some little cause of complaint had happened either on the one side or the other. An event so strange, so little dreamed of, put all conjecture to a stand; people pretended not even to guess what should be the occasion, much less to unravel so great a mystery; the accomplishment of that work was reserved by fate for the Invisible Spy alone. The manner in which I made this discovery, I shall relate as concisely as the conversation which let me into it will admit of.

As I was one day taking a solitary walk on Constitution Hill, I saw Deidamia leaning on the arm of Eutracia, a lady of birth and fortune, who had been bred up with her at the boarding-school, and ever since been her most intimate friend and companion. Just as they approached the place where I was, the following dialogue began between them—

Deidamia. Now for the secret you have to tell me; methinks I have a more than ordinary impatience to hear it, and we cannot be more retired: no living soul is near us, and there is no danger of any one coming to interrupt our discourse, as all the world are in the Mall.

Eutracia. I will not keep you long in suspense, my dear; but first you must answer two or three questions I have to ask you, and then resolve to arm yourself with all the fortitude you are mistress of, not to be too much shocked at what I shall relate.

Deidamia. I cannot conceive that there is any thing which either you or any one else can tell me capable of giving me a shock. But pray, what is it you would know from me?

Eutracia. The town looks upon you as one of the most happy women in it; is it true that you are really so?

Deidamia. Indeed, my dear, I think myself so; and if I would labour to be more blessed, know not how to form a single wish beyond what I possess.

Eutracia. There are many private causes of disquiet, which prudence obliges us to conceal. Are you thoroughly convinced of the affection of your husband?

Deidamia. I never had the least cause to doubt it; and the tenderness I have for him is so sincere and delicate, as I think would make me easily perceive a want of it in him. But wherefore do

you ask? you cannot have any reason to suspect him.

Eutracia. Ah, poor Deidamia!

Deidamia. Why do you sigh; and look so piteously upon me? Some wretch has certainly belied Meroveus to you.

Eutracia. No. But one more interrogatory, and I have done. Does he never absent himself without letting you know where he goes? never lie out of his own house?

Deidamia. Very seldom, and that but lately. An intimate friend of his mistakes his addresses to a young lady at Hammersmith. He frequently desires my husband's company with him, and they sometimes stay all night; when having supped there, it is dangerous to return to London, as the roads are now infested.

Eutracia. How easy is it to deceive the innocent!—Meroveus is a villain!

Deidamia. How, Eutracia! a villain! Had any other called him so, my resentment should have shewn how much I despised so base an accusation.

Eutracia. Alas! it is your own love and honour makes you so tenacious of his, but he is false in both; and I again repeat the name, he is a villain! and will put it in your power to prove him so, by the testimony of your own eyes and ears, provided you promise to give him no previous hints, that you have discovered, or even suspect his perfidy.

Deidamia. But how—how, Eutracia, is he a villain?

Eutracia. He keeps a mistress; some common wench, no doubt: but he adores, doats on her, pretends himself her husband; and those nights when you imagine him at Hammersmith, he passes with her.

The tender Deidamia was now so overcome at these words, that her spirits quite forsook her, and she must certainly have fallen on the earth, if they had not happened to be very near a bench, at the lower end of the walk, where Eutracia placed her. The keeper of the gate perceiving her condition, was so humane as to run and fetch some water, which being sprinkled on her face, soon brought her to herself. Eutracia, on seeing her fair friend thus agitated, seemed, and I believe really was, very much concerned at what she had done; for she could not restrain some tears from falling down her eyes, while she expressed herself in these terms—

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'My dearest Deidamia, if I had not thought you would have received this intelligence with more moderation, you should have been for ever ignorant of it.' The afflicted lady made no reply to these words; but in a few minutes growing somewhat more composed, quitted the bench, and leaning on Eutracia, the conversation was renewed in this manner—

Deidamia. Oh, Eutracia! little are you capable of conceiving the agonies this poor, distracted, bleeding heart, sustains! Yet I must know all. Tell me by what means you got information of this horrid secret, and how you are assured of it's veracity.

Eutracia. It was not my intention to conceal any part of it; but you must determine to listen with calmness to me.

Deidamia. I will.

Eutracia. Well, then, I will tell you all. I believe you know Mrs. Flounceit, my mantua-maker.

Deidamia. I saw her once. You may remember I was with you when she brought home your last new sacque.

Eutracia. That woman, you must know, has an interest with some foreign merchants, and can frequently oblige her customers with some curious things which are prohibited to be sold in publick. She came last Monday, and acquainted me that she had several patterns of the most beautiful chintz that ever were seen. I went the next morning in order to see them, and was carried into a back parlour, for the sake of privacy. As I was looking over the goods, I heard a man call from the top of the stair-case, to know if the coach was come. I thought myself perfectly acquainted with the voice, though I could not just then recollect whose it was; but presently after saw Meroveus lead a woman across the garden, at the lower end of which there is a little door that opens into another street. A pebble, or some such thing, happening to lie in the walk, she stumbled in passing; on which he cried out, with the greatest tenderness—'I hope you are not hurt, my love!'—'No,' replied she, briskly; 'not at all. I cannot receive any prejudice when my guardian angel is so near.' I was so astonished at what I saw and heard, that I had not power to speak; till Mrs. Flounceit, seeing me look earnestly after them, told me they

were her lodgers; that they were lately married; but some reasons obliging them to keep it private, they met each other there only once or twice a week. 'So,' said she, 'I have very little trouble with them, and they pay me a good rent.'—'But are you sure,' cried I, 'that they are man and wife? It may be an intrigue.'—'No,' answered she; 'they were recommended to me by a gentleman who formerly lodged with me himself, one Sir David Townly.'

Deidamia. Oh Heavens! Sir David Townly! Why he is the very person my husband pretends he goes with to Hammersmith.

Eutracia. It is very likely he may be his confidant in this amour.

Deidamia. Yet still I know not how to think it real; one man may be like another. Are you certain it was Meroveus whom you saw?

Eutracia. As certain as that it is Deidamia to whom I am talking. Did he not lie abroad last Monday night?

Deidamia. He did.

Eutracia. And had he not on a dark brown velvet coat, and a black waistcoat trimmed with bugles?

Deidamia. He had. Oh, I can no longer shut my eyes against conviction! The dreadful truth is too glaring to be resisted, and I see myself the most miserable of women!

Eutracia. Do not think so; rather exert the spirit of an injured wife, detect him in his guilt, shame him to repentance, and make him sue for pardon.

Deidamia. Oh that such love as ours has been should come to this!

Eutracia. All may be yet retrieved; your just reproaches may make him loathe his past follies, and become more yours than if he never had transgressed. The next time he takes his pretended journey to Hammersmith, let me know it.

Deidamia. He is gone thither now. Just before you came to call me to the Park, he told me Sir David had engaged his company, and he believed he should not return till morning.

Eutracia. Well, then, he shall be met, my dear Deidamia; he shall be met by those he least expects, or desires to see. I will take you in the morning to Mrs. Flounceit's, under pretence of bringing her a new customer; there you will have the same opportunity I had of discovering your husband's guilt, and may

may act as you shall judge proper on the occasion.

Deidamia. How shall I contain myself! Base, base man! cruel deceiver of my fond, my unsuspecting heart!—How bear the sight of that vile she! that infamous deluder of his honour! that curst she who has robbed me of the only treasure I valued upon earth, my husband's love!

Here she burst into the most vehement exclamations. But my Crystalline Remembrancer being already overcharged, I can only say that her behaviour verified the words of Mr. Nat. Lee; who, in his description he gives of the passions of womankind in general, has these lines—

- ‘ They shrink at thunder, dread the rust-
ling wind,
- ‘ And glitt’ring swords the brightest eyes
will blind;
- ‘ Yet when strong jealousy enflames the
soul,
- ‘ The weak will rage, and calms to tem-
pests roll.’

The ladies continued their walk, till Phœbus beginning to withdraw his beams, they both thought proper to retire from the approaching dews. Eutracia, justly apprehending the agitations of her friend would become more violent if left alone and at liberty to indulge them, offered to be her companion that night, which the other gladly accepted, and I saw them take coach together for Deidamia's house, after which I went home.

CHAP. V.

WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE AUTHOR'S OPINION, STANDS IN NO NEED OF A PRELUDE, AS IT CONTAINS ONLY THE SEQUEL OF AN ADVENTURE TOO INTERESTING TO ALL DEGREES OF PEOPLE NOT TO DEMAND THE ATTENTION OF EVERY READER.

I Was truly concerned at the injustice which I perceived poor Deidamia sustained; and but little pleased with Eutracia, either for the information she had given her of it, or for advising her to detect Méroveus in the manner con-

certed between them: indeed, I feared that the consequences of such an interview would be only to make the husband become more hardened in his guilt, and her affliction increase by finding her resentment disregarded.

Few men can bear reproofs, much less reproaches. If ever they quit a darling folly, the reformation must come of themselves; it must proceed from a consciousness they have done amiss, and not from being told so by others. There is a pride in human nature which disdains admonition, and makes us persist in error, which, if not taken notice of, perhaps in time we might discover to be such, grow ashamed of, and amend. Besides, remonstrances from a person whom we look upon as any way our inferior, either in point of understanding or circumstances, will be so far from having any weight, that they will rather add to our contempt, and, it may be, raise in us an utter aversion to the giver. Custom has made the husband so much the head of the wife, that, tenacious of his authority, it is but seldom he submits to be influenced by her in matters of much less moment to him than his pleasures.

Indeed, when a woman is wronged in the manner Deidamia was, it must be confessed that the shock is greatly trying, and that she has the strongest reason for complaining; yet will she still find it most prudent to forbear. Love and gentleness are the only weapons by which that sex can hope to conquer; and she who attempts to have recourse to any other, only hurts herself. By seeming not to suspect her husband's vices, she will, at least, oblige him to keep them as private as he can, and also to treat her with all the respect due to her character, and the sacred union between them; whereas, by growing clamorous and impatient, she furnishes him with a pretence to use her ill, and turns the indifference he before had for her into hatred and detestation.

One of our best poets has an observation on this head, which I think is very well worthy of the serious attention of all who are either injured in reality, or imagine themselves to be so, yet find it their interest to preserve an amicable correspondence with the person guilty of the injury; as it is certain that no man, detected in the thing which he wishes to

conceal, can ever love the person by whom he is detected. The words of the author I mentioned are these—

- ‘ Forgiveness to the injur’d does belong;
- ‘ But they ne’er pardon who have done the
‘ wrong.’

These reflections, together with my impatience to see how Deidamia would support the full conviction of her husband’s falsehood, so much took up my mind, that it was a considerable time before I remembered how great an impediment lay between me and the gratification of my curiosity. Mrs. Flounceit’s house was to be the scene of action; and the ladies, during their whole conversation, had made no mention in what street, nor even in what quarter of the town, that woman lived: however, as I supposed her to be a noted woman in her business, I hoped to get over this difficulty; and did so, by sending an emissary to enquire among the mercers, hoop-petticoat-makers, and other such people who are employed in the equipments of the ladies; and I went not to bed without receiving the direction I stood in need of.

As I knew not the hour in which Meropeus and the partner of his looser pleasures would be preparing to depart, nor that in which Deidamia would be conducted by Eutraccia to behold this proof of her misfortune, I took care to go very early to Mrs. Flounceit’s, and was obliged to wait a considerable time before the door happened to be opened to let any one pass in or out; at last, however, it was so; I got an opportunity to enter, went into the back-parlour, and posted myself in that corner of it which I thought would be the safest and most commodious. My patience was not here put to any long trial; the ladies arrived a few minutes after I came, ushered into the room by Mrs. Flounceit, who placed them on a settee with a great deal of formal complaisance, and then made some apologies, as many people do when they are dressed as well as they can be, for being in such a dishabille, and not in the order she could wish to receive them.

It was easy for me to perceive, by Deidamia’s countenance, how ill she had passed the night; Eutraccia also seemed in some agitation, though she dissembled it as well as she was able; and

after giving some slight answer to Mrs. Flounceit’s compliments, told her she had brought a friend to look over some of her fine things; on which the mantua-maker immediately opened a large press, and brought out several pieces of chintz, with some French brocades, and rich Italian silks; these she spread upon a table, accompanying that action with many praises on the beauty and curiosity of each. But it was in vain she boasted, in vain she magnified; all she said, as well as the real merit of the goods she exhibited to sale, was wholly lost on Deidamia; the mind of that afflicted lady was too much bent on those things which she expected to be witness of, to have any eyes or ears for those which were not present to her: she took up first one piece, and then another, but without seeming to know what she did; and had something so distracted in her air and gestures, that Eutraccia was obliged to keep Mrs. Flounceit in discourse, to prevent her taking any notice of it. Her behaviour, joined with my knowledge of the cause, reminded me of Mr. Dryden’s words; which, if she had been inclined to think of poetry, she might pretty justly have applied to her own condition in this crisis—

- ‘ Love, justice, nature, pity, and revenge,
- ‘ Have kindled a wildfire in my breast;
- ‘ I am all a civil war within,
- ‘ And, like a vessel struggling in a storm,
- ‘ Require more hands than one to keep me
‘ upright.’

But if she was so little able to support the bare idea of the shock she came on purpose to receive, what must she endure when suspense, and all the remains of hope, were swallowed up in the cruel certainty of her misfortune, and conviction left no farther room for doubt? The maid of the house came into the room with a chocolate-pot in her hand, and told her mistress that the gentleman and lady above stairs gave their compliments, and desired the favour of her company to breakfast with them. Mrs. Flounceit was about to make some answer to this invitation, when Deidamia, not able to contain herself, flew out of the parlour, and directly up stairs, where she found Meropeus and a young woman sitting on the side of the bed they had but lately quitted.

Deidamia

[illegible]

...the
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

about it he was loath to tell. He said he was at the back of the room, but he could not see what was going on. He said he was at the back of the room, but he could not see what was going on. He said he was at the back of the room, but he could not see what was going on.

...can ever love the person by
...is described. The words of
...mentioned are false.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with your eyes. I hope they will get better soon.

[illegible]

AP 1914
MUSEUM

It was early for me to perceive by
Lindbergh's countenance, how all the
I pulled the night. Lindbergh also
used no force against the airplane
because it as well as the was also and





Plate V.

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Deidamia had scarce entered the chamber, when she surprized the guilty pair with these words—'I have a right, Sir, to think my company ought to be as acceptable to Meroveus as that of Mrs. Flounceit, or any other woman.'

Eutraccia had followed Deidamia as fast as she could, in order, I suppose, to prevent any desperate effects of her present passion, and I was not far behind. But it will be more easy for the reader to conceive the surprize which appeared in the looks of Meroveus, than for me to express it; he started up, and, with a voice which the various emotions of his mind rendered almost unintelligible, said to her—

Meroveus. Confusion! Deidamia!—Madam, what brings you here?

Deidamia. That is a question which ought rather to be put to you. I came in pursuit of an ungrateful, too much beloved husband: you to indulge a lawless flame for an abandoned prostitute!

Meroveus. Madam, Madam, this does not become you!

Deidamia. Does it become you, Sir, to leave your honest home and wife, make pitiful excuses for your absence, and skulk in corners with a wretch like this—this abject hireling of licentious wishes!

Mistress. Madam, I would not have you think I am any such person: I did not know Meroveus was a married man.

Deidamia. 'Tis false, vile creature! You could not know Meroveus, without knowing he had a wife; a wife who, without boasting, is every way his equal. But get out of my sight, that I may have liberty to ask my perjured husband what he could see in that face of yours to be preferred to mine.

On this Meroveus was opening his mouth to speak, but was prevented by Mrs. Flounceit; who being astonished on the lady's running up stairs, and by the noise she immediately heard above, had hobbled up as fast as her fat would give her leave, and came into the room that moment, crying as she entered—

Mrs. Flounceit. Bless me! what is the matter here?

Deidamia. Perhaps, Madam, you are ignorant that your house is made a brothel?

Mrs. Flounceit. O, my stars!—A brothel! Heaven forbid!

Eutraccia. My friend tells you true, indeed. She is the lawful wife of that

gentleman; they have been married above seven years; I was present at their wedding; and that woman, there, is no better than a prostitute.

Mrs. Flounceit. O the vile slut!—I wonder Sir David Townly should offer to bring me into this scrape; he knows very well I never countenance such doings.—Hussey, get out of my house this minute!

In speaking this, she advanced towards the mistress of Meroveus, and was about to push her out of the room; but that gentleman, perceiving her intent, stepped between; and with a visage all enflamed with wrath, said—'Hold, Madam, hold! This lady has put herself under my protection, and I will take care to defend her from all insults whatsoever.' Then turning to Deidamia, went on thus—'As for you, Madam, you have only exposed me, and undone yourself. I will never see you more!' He then took his trembling mistress by the hand, to lead her down stairs: Deidamia, in the utmost agony of spirit, followed him; and catching him by the arm, cried out to him—'Oh stay, Meroveus! You will not, sure, add injury to injury! Stay, I conjure you, and let that woman go!' To which he replied—'Stand off, Madam! Your touch is now more hateful to me than ever it was agreeable; so leave you to repent the cause.'

This cruel rebuff not making her let go the hold she had taken of him, he threw her off with the greatest contempt, and in an instant was out of the house with his dissolute companion; who was, doubtless, as hasty as himself to get from a place where she could expect nothing but affronts. Deidamia would have pursued her ungenerous husband, perhaps even into the street, had she not been withheld by Eutraccia, who endeavoured to convince her how little it would avail to remonstrate any thing to him whilst he continued in this humour.

Rage had till now kept up the spirits of this unhappy lady; but the objects of it being removed, and the power of reflecting returned, she sunk into a grief no less immoderate; she wept, she wrung her hands, beat her lovely breast, she swooned several times, and in her intervals of sense could only cry out—'Cruel, barbarous Meroveus! Unfaithful, ungenerous

' ungenerous husband! Good Heaven! for what unknown transgression am I become thus miserable!' Neither Eutracia nor Mrs. Flounceit omitted any thing in their power which they thought might serve to give her consolation, but all they could do was insufficient; and it was some hours before she was enough recovered even to be carried home. As soon as she was, Eutracia went with her in the coach; and I walked home, touched to the very soul at the sight of her distress.

I have already given the reader my opinion concerning the extreme folly of revealing unwelcome secrets to our friends; so shall forbear adding any farther reflections on that head, and proceed, with as much brevity as the story will admit, to the catastrophe of this unhappy adventure.

I went the next morning to the house of Meroveus, and was convinced, by what I heard the servants say among themselves, that he had not been at home that night; which, indeed, I feared would be the case. On my going up stairs, I found Deidamia lying on a couch, in a very dejected, melancholy posture. Eutracia was sitting near her; that lady, it seems, having never quitted her since the unfortunate visit they made together at Mrs. Flounceit's. But as the discourse between them consisted only of complaints on the one side, and persuasions to moderation on the other, I think it not material enough to be inserted. I had not been in the room above a quarter of an hour, before a servant presented a letter to Deidamia; it was from her husband, and contained these lines—

' MADAM,

' I Am determined to live easy, which I am certain is utterly impracticable for me to do with you, after what passed yesterday between us. What I then said in heat of passion, I now repeat in cool blood, and on the most mature deliberation. In fine, an eternal disunion must be the consequence of your behaviour, nor should the tongues of angels dissuade me from this resolution: you will do well to bear it with patience; as the misfortune, if it may be one, has happened entirely through your own fault.

' To leave you no just reason to complain, I shall order the jointure, settled on you by our marriage articles, to be regularly paid to you, as though I

' were no more; and shall resign to you all the plate, linen, and household furniture, excepting only my books, the India chest and bureau in my dressing-room.

' As to our children, the boy I shall take under my care, the girl I leave to yours; and shall also add one hundred pounds per annum to the above-mentioned jointure, for her maintenance and education.

' Farewel for ever!—As we no more must meet in love, it will be highly improper, and I think could not be very agreeable to either of us, to meet at all; I shall therefore refrain, as much as possible, going to any of those places you are accustomed to frequent, and hope you will have prudence enough to take the same precaution in avoiding me, especially when I tell you, that it is the only thing in which you can now oblige your ill-treated husband,

' MEROVEUS.

' P. S. I shall send to-morrow for the things I mentioned.'

My fair readers will be the best judges of what Deidamia felt on finding her husband had taken a resolution which could not but give the most mortal stab both to her love and pride. She paused a little after having read it, then gave it to Eutracia, crying out at the same time, with the greatest emphasis—' See there, my dear Eutracia, this wicked husband is the sole aggressor, yet pretends to be the person who has reason to resent!' That young lady, who was all fire and spirit, could not forbear loading Meroveus with reproaches at the end of every paragraph she read; and when she had finished, said to Deidamia—

Eutracia. And how, my dear, do you intend to proceed with this base, this most injurious man?

Deidamia. Indeed I know not.

Eutracia. If I were in your place, I would write him such an answer as should make his ears tingle.

Deidamia. Alas, you know not what it is to be a wife!—But I will write, however.

She then rung her bell for the footman, and asked whether the person who brought the letter waited for an answer,

Footman.

Footman. No, Madam, he only bid me deliver it into your own hands, and told me my master ordered me to come to him about two hours hence at George's Coffee-house, and bring some linen with me.

Deidamia. 'Tis very well. But do not go till I have spoke to you again; I have a message to send by you.

The fellow assured her he would not fail to obey her commands, and withdrew; after which she sat down to her escritoire, took pen and paper, and began to write in the following terms—

'Cruel and unjust, yet still dear Mx-
'ROVEUS!

'IF there needed any other proof than that shameful one I yesterday was witness of, that I am miserable in the total loss of your affection, the letter I have just now received would be a convincing one. What! after seven years conjugal tenderness, perfect and sincere on my side, and well dissembled on yours, can you entertain a thought of parting? of tearing a family to pieces which has hitherto lived so respectable in the world? Must I be doomed to mourn a husband's loss even while that husband lives? Must my son be bred an alien to his mother, and my daughter a stranger to her father? O think, Meroveus! and if no consideration of me has any weight, let that of your own reputation, and the interest of our children, prevail on you to alter this cruel resolution! We may at least live civilly together, if not with the same fondness as before this accident. Yet why should we not? I am willing to meet you more than half way in love. You cannot deny but you have wronged me in the most tender point. I confess I was too rash in the manner of detecting you. We both have been to blame. What is done cannot be recalled, but it may be repented of: let us exchange forgiveness, and endeavour to forget what is past.

'There was a time when every little ailment felt by your Deidamia gave equal pain to you; oh! can you then throw off at once all pity, all humanity, all remorse, for the agonies you cannot but be sensible my poor tormented heart now labours under! No, 'tis impossible! reason, honour, and good-nature, forbid it! You will

return, accept the pardon I shall with joy bestow; and, in return, vouchsafe me yours. Let not my hopes deceive me; I am sure they will not, if you will suffer yourself to reflect seriously on the unhappy consequences that must infallibly attend a separation from her who ever has been, and desires to continue, with the greatest sincerity, your most faithful, and most affectionate wife,

'DEIDAMIA.'

This she communicated to Eutracia, who approved of the former part of it, but highly condemned the latter, as thinking it too submissive. Deidamia, however, was of a different opinion; and the footman coming in soon after to know her commands, she sealed it up, and put it into his hands, to deliver to his master; bidding him say wihal, that she was very much indisposed.

After he was gone, the ladies began to enter into some dispute concerning the authority of a husband, and the duty that was expected from a wife; but as I could promise myself no farther information by their discourse on this subject, and, besides, remembering that I had some business of my own to dispatch, I left the place that instant, not without an intention to return thither the next day. Accordingly I went in the morning, and found poor Deidamia almost drowned in tears, and walking backwards and forwards in one of her rooms in a distracted posture. The cause of these fresh agonies I easily perceived by a letter which lay open on the table; the contents whereof were as follow—

'MADAM,

'I Have been in some debate within my mind, whether to answer your epistle in the manner I now do, or not to answer it at all, would be the most effectual means to prevent your giving me or yourself any future trouble. You find I have pursued the former of these methods, and hope you will have discretion enough not to involve me in a second dilemma on this score. Be assured, I did not resolve on a final separation without having well weighed the consequences attending it, and find them such as can no way come in competition with my peace of mind; without which life would be a curse, my bed a bed of thorns, my table a de-

'sart,

'sart, my house a hell, and every friend that came to visit, a fury to torment me.

' See the reverse your jealous folly has occasioned! tax me not, therefore, with ingratitude. A thousand times you have confessed you thought yourself as happy as a woman could be, and it is certain you were truly so. During the whole course of the years we lived together, you never had the least shadow of a cause to complain of my want either of respect or tenderness. If I indulged any pleasures which I imagined would give you disquiet, I took care to be very private in them. Why, then, did you suffer yourself to be led by an idle curiosity to pry into secrets which the discovery of must give you pain, and possibly prove the total destruction of that love which once you called your greatest blessing?

' It is doubtless best for both of us, as you rightly enough observe, to forget what is past; but am far from thinking it can be done by the way you mean. No, to forget can only be accomplished by avoiding each other's presence, and ceasing all kind of communication between us. I shall therefore give orders to my servant to charge himself with no letter or message you may think fit to send; and desire you will assure yourself, that this is the very last you ever shall receive from me. Farewel. I wish you all happiness in any other sphere of life than that you lately lived in with

' MEROVEUS.'

After having examined this epistle, I listened to what passed between Eutracia and Deidamia: but though I staid till my Tablets were crouded, I shall forbear inserting the particulars of these ladies discourse, for reasons which will be hereafter explained; and only say in general, that Eutracia would fain have spirited up her friend to resentment and disdain against a husband whom she thought so unworthy of her; that Deidamia's love overcame her sex's pride; and, in fine, that the one argued like a virgin, and the other like an affectionate wife. Whether Deidamia made any further attempts to move her obdurate husband to a reconciliation, I cannot be positive; but believe she did not, for

she retired soon after into the country, whence she is but lately returned; and, whatever her heart may endure, has very much regained her usual composure of countenance and behaviour.

CHAP. VI.

IS SOMEWHAT MORE CONCISE THAN ORDINARY, BUT TO THE PURPOSE; AND WILL BE FOUND NOT THE LEAST WORTHY OF ANY IN THE BOOK OF BEING REGARDED WITH ATTENTION.

AS during the course of these lucubrations I have been extremely circumstantial in the reports I have made, the reader has a right to be surprized that I omitted the discourse between Deidamia and Eutracia; I shall, therefore, according to my promise, relate my motive for so doing, and flatter myself it is such as will render me perfectly excusable in this point. Much about the time of the adventure related in the two preceding chapters, I happened to be witness of a conversation which, though between different persons, and on a very different occasion, was still on the subject of marriage, the authority of a husband, and the submission expected from a wife; I left out the former, and made choice of the latter, as of the two the most interesting.

Two sisters, whose characters I present to the publick under the names of Flavia and Celemena, have both of them a tolerable share of beauty, but no other qualification, either natural or acquired, that could entitle them to the hope of an elevated station; yet, by the benevolent aspect of their happy planets, are they become the brides of Alcandor and Thelamont, persons distinguished in the world by their birth and fortune, and still more so by the greatness of their merit. These nuptials, so astonishing to the town, and which happened soon after one another, gave me a curiosity to discover, by the help of my Invisibility, in what fashion the ladies would behave themselves in a sphere of life so altogether new to them, and so little expected, even in their vainest wishes, ever to arrive at.

Flavia was the eldest, and it was to her I made my first visit. She was in her dressing-room, sitting at her toilet, with

with her waiting-maid behind her, giving the finishing stroke to her head-tie. Thelamont was also there, and stood leaning his elbow on a bureau, with a good deal of dissatisfaction in his countenance; while she kept looking in the glass, and, without turning her head towards him, said—

Flavia. Pr'ythee, Thelamont, let us talk no more of this stuff; I am quite sick of it. I am certainly the best judge of these things, and it is in vain to persuade me, for I will not be contradicted.

Thelamont. You will not, then, oblige me?

Flavia. Positively no; not when you intermeddle in these affairs.

Thelamont. Well, then, Madam, I shall say no more; but must tell you, that I thought I had a right to expect this proof of your complaisance.

With these words he flung out of the room, and she said to herself—

Flavia. Fish! was there ever any thing so teasing! Men are mighty foolish sometimes.—Catharine, bring me my gauze handkerchief.

Maid. Oh, Ma'am, did not your ladyship say you would wear your new tippet to-day?

Flavia. Hah!—Yes—no—it will shew too much of my neck.

Maid. Oh, Ma'am, your ladyship cannot shew too much of so beautiful a part.

Flavia. That's true; but I scratched one of my breasts with a pin this morning.

Maid. Oh the ugly pin! I wish I knew which it was, that I might crook it quite double, and throw it in the fire.

Just as the maid had expressed her resentment against the weapon that had wounded her mistress, Celestina came into the room; and, after saluting her sister with a freedom suitable to the nearness of their blood and friendship, said to her—

Celestina. What is the matter, my dear sister? You do not look pleased to-day.

Flavia. Umph! No, not very well pleased; nor, indeed, much displeased.

Celestina. I met Thelamont going out as I came in. I thought he seemed more reserved than usual; and in a very ill-humour.

Flavia. If he chuses to be so, it would be a pity any one should attempt to put him out of it.

Celestina. I hope no misunderstanding has happened between you?

Flavia. No, no, we understand one another pretty well. I understand that he would fain pretend to take upon him the government of my actions, and he understands that I will not let him do it; so we have exchanged a few words this morning, that's all.

Celestina. Have a care, sister; quarrels in the beginning of marriage promise but little felicity in the continuance of that state.

Flavia. That's true; but it is very provoking when a man will needs interfere in things he has no manner of concern with.

Celestina. Pray, what is the subject of your dispute, if it be not too great a secret?

Flavia. Why, you must know, he wants me to leave off putting any carmine upon my cheeks, calls it nasty daubing, and says I should be a thousand times handsomer without it.

Celestina. I can see nothing extraordinary in all this. There are many men who have an utter aversion to a woman's using any art to her complexion.

Flavia. They may cry out against it; but yet I am sure it is frequently owing to art that they fall so much in love with us. A little red upon the cheeks gives a sparkle to the eyes, and a lustre to the features, which otherwise would appear flat and languid. But they are so foolish as not to consider this; they like us as they see us altogether; and though they may be sensible we are painted, never once imagine it is to that necessary auxiliary to beauty that we are chiefly indebted for those charms which attract their admiration.

Celestina. Suppose it as you say, which, however, I am far from allowing to be always the case; Thelamont has now seen you such as Nature made you: the night wears off that borrowed lustre, and the morning shews you what you truly are; and if he approves of you in this light, I know of no other person whom you need be studious to please.

Flavia. I am of a quite different opinion. O the joy of being gazed at and followed by a whole crowded Mall!

Celestina. Perhaps to laugh; but if sincere, a very empty joy, and what a married woman ought not to be too ambitious of.

Flavia. So, then, you would have

me comply with my husband's request?

Celestina. Indeed I would advise you to it. I am sure, if Alcandor expressed a desire that I should cut off my hair, and never let it grow again, though it is the gift of Nature, and bestowed upon us as the greatest ornament of our sex, I would not hesitate one moment to oblige him.

Flavia. Then you are a fool.

Celestina. In this point I do not think I am: for besides that duty which the law exacts from every wife to her husband, there are other reasons which would oblige me to refuse nothing to Alcandor.

She accompanied these words with a very significant look; which Flavia observing, ordered her maid, who had been all this time in the room, to withdraw; and, as soon as she was gone, replied to what her sister had said in these terms—

Flavia. I know not what you would say; you would infer that, because Alcandor and Thelamont married us without fortunes, we are therefore bound to be their slaves.

Celestina. Not so: and I dare believe, that neither of them will ever require any submissions from us but such as, if we had always been their equals, would very well become us to grant.

Flavia. Laird! what a bustle you make about equals! Whatever we were before, marriage has made us now their equals; and, for my own part, I shall never submit to do any thing Thelamont requires of me, unless my own inclination happens to concur.

Celestina. Oh, sister, I am amazed to hear you talk in this manner! Have you been married but one month, and can already forget the unhappiness of our single state; our scanty and precarious dependance; the difficulties we found to supply ourselves with even the common necessities of life? We made, indeed, a kind of tawdry shew when we appeared abroad; but how did we pinch for it at home! Is there no love, no gratitude, due from us to men who have raised us to opulence, grandeur, and respect!

Flavia. Pish! they married us to please themselves, not out of pity to us. But let us have no more of this dull stuff. You must go with me to Mrs. Rake-love's rout to-night; it is the first she

has had, and I promised her to bring all the company I could.

Celestina. Indeed you must excuse me.

Flavia. For what reason?

Celestina. Alcandor sups at home, and I cannot be abroad.

Flavia. Heavens! how strangely silly you are grown!—Alcandor sups at home! What then? he did not marry you to make you a cook! You do not dress his victuals?

Celestina. No; but he married me to make me a companion at his victuals; and while he continues to desire my presence, as I flatter myself he always will, I shall never form any pretences to be absent.

The face of Flavia grew more red than the carmine had made it, on finding in her sister sentiments so opposite to her own; but was prevented from making any answer by the entrance of a servant, who told her that some ladies were come to visit her; on which she went, accompanied by Celestina, into the dining-room, in order to receive them. Thus ended the conversation I mentioned; and by it the reader may judge which of these two sisters had the greatest share of prudence, best deserved her good fortune, and was most likely to enjoy a long continuance of it.

CHAP. VII.

PRESENTS THE ACCOUNT OF AN INCIDENT WHICH CANNOT BUT BE DEEPLY AFFECTING TO THE YOUTH OF BOTH SEXES, AND NO LESS REMARKABLE IN IT'S EVENT THAN ANY THE AUTHOR'S INVISIBILITYSHIP EVER ENABLED HIM TO DISCOVER.

AMONG all the various deceptions which are carried on in this great world, I know of none more cruel, and more liable to be attended with the worst of consequences, than those practised in the affairs of love; yet it is a crime which passes with impunity, and is scarce censured by any but the persons injured by it, and their particular friends and confidants. Even the ladies, generally speaking, for there is no rule without exception, are so little the friends of each other, that we rarely find

find them taking up the quarrel of their sex in this point; on the contrary, they are apt to absolve the vow-breaker, and let the whole blame fall on the believer. A man who has triumphed over the credulity of an hundred women, sees himself not less respected; and sometimes the number of past conquests shall serve him as a recommendation, and be a means of his attaining new ones. Perjury is deemed but a venal transgression in this case; few think that oaths and imprecations, when dictated by the heart of an amorous inclination, though formed in the most binding terms, and uttered in the most solemn manner, are ever registered in heaven.

This vice, as I must take the liberty to call it, is not, however, wholly confined to the male sex; I am sorry to observe, that those of the other, either through pride, vanity, or an inconstancy of nature, are sometimes found guilty of deluding their lovers with fallacious expectations. I hope also to be forgiven by the more discreet part of womankind, when I say that a propensity to such a behaviour is yet less excusable in them than in the men; as a perfect innocence, a sweetness of disposition, and a simplicity of manners, are, or ought to be, the distinguishing characteristics of the fair-sex.

A young lady, to whom I shall give the name of Syrenia, was endowed by nature with every requisite to command love and admiration; she had fine eyes, a regular set of features, fine hair, and a most delicate complexion; was tall, well-shaped, and had somewhat peculiarly attractive in her air. Fortune had not been altogether so propitious to her; through the extravagancies of her parents, she was left in possession of a very moderate fortune: it was, however, entirely at her own disposal, and sufficient, with the good œconomy she was mistress of, to support her in a very genteel, though not a grand way of life.

Proposals of marriage had often been made to her by several eminent and wealthy citizens; but she rejected them all, and despised the thoughts not only of a shop, but also of all other callings and occupations whatever. Ambition was the predominant passion of her soul; and she had vanity enough to think that her birth, her person, and accomplishments, were such as might very well

compensate for the smallness of her fortune, and entitle her to higher expectations.

She had lived till the age of twenty-three without having any offer of the kind she hoped; but about the expiration of that æra, a young gentleman, named Rossano, happening to see her at the house of a relation whom he visited, became violently in love with her; and soon after finding means to get himself introduced, made a declaration of his passion; to which, knowing what and who he was, she gave all the encouragement he could wish, or that was befitting the character of a modest woman. It would, indeed, have been much to be wondered at, if the addresses of Rossano had not been acceptable to her: he is descended from a very ancient and worthy family; has an estate of eight hundred pounds per annum, entirely free from any incumbrance, either mortgage, dowry, or portions to be paid out of it; his person and behaviour are extremely agreeable; and, to add to all this, has deservedly the reputation of a man of strict honour, and more sobriety than could be expected from his years and the dissoluteness of the present times.

The sincerity and warmth of his affection making him very strenuous in his pressures, and the advantages she found in a match with him rendering her complying, they were beginning to talk of ordering articles for their marriage to be drawn up; when an unexpected accident, relating to his estate, obliged him to go immediately into the country. Though he proposed to stay but a short time, yet he could not think of being deprived of the sight of his beloved Syrenia, even for a few weeks, without an infinity of grief. She testified little less regret for this enforced separation: their parting was extremely moving; each seemed to endeavour to outvie the other in expressions of tenderness; and the only consolation he had was, the repeated assurances she gave him, that wherever he went he carried her heart along with him.

It is highly probable, that the affection she professed for him was at that time perfectly sincere, and that she looked upon the accident which delayed the celebration of their nuptials as no inconsiderable misfortune to her; but whatever chagrin she might feel at first on this account, it was very soon dissipated,

pated, and gave way to ideas of a far different nature. The motive which brought about so sudden and so extraordinary a change in her sentiments, I shall relate, as I was afterwards fully informed of it by the several conversations I was present at by the help of my Invisibleness.

She was one morning in the Park with a lady of her acquaintance called Delia, where they were met and joined by a young officer, brother to Delia, and a gentleman who was with him, and equally a stranger to both the ladies, but behaved towards them with the greatest respect and politeness. They walked two or three turns up and down the Mall; after which the gentlemen took their leave, and Syrenia and Delia went to their respective habitations, without thinking any more of what had passed. Little, indeed, could either of them apprehend the consequences of this adventure: but the next day, early in the forenoon, Syrenia was surprized with a visit from Delia; who came running into her apartment without any ceremony, crying out as she entered—

Delia. Joy to you, my dear! I come to wish you joy!

Syrenia. Of what? for I see no other subject of joy than what I always feel on seeing you.

Delia. Me! No, no; a thousand such as me are quite out of the question; but I have the pleasure to congratulate you on the greatest conquest your beauty ever made, or perhaps ever can make!

Syrenia. You are got into a vein of raillery this morning.

Delia. No, upon my honour I never was more serious. Do you not remember the fine gentleman that was with my brother yesterday in the Mall?

Syrenia. Yes; you know they joined company with us.

Delia. His name is Leontine; he is the eldest son of his father, and heir apparent to three thousand pounds a year. You saw his person; for my part, I think nothing can be more agreeable; and my brother tells me he is the most accomplished man he ever knew.

Syrenia. Well, and what is all this to me?

Delia. It is all to you. It seems he saw you last Sunday at Westminster Abbey, fell violently in love with you, and would have followed to have seen where you lived, but was prevented by

some gentlemen of his acquaintance, who that instant laid hold of him, and forced him along with them.

Syrenia. 'Tis possible such a one might be there; but I did not take notice of him.

Delia. That may be; but he took so much of you, as not to be able to sleep ever since.

Syrenia. Very romantick, truly! But, pray, how came you so well acquainted with the secrets of his heart, who yesterday seemed an utter stranger to his person?

Delia. I will tell you the whole affair, as my brother last night came and informed me of it. After they had left us, they went and dined together at a tavern. Leontine asked a thousand questions concerning your family, your fortune, and your character; all which, you may be sure, were answered not to your disadvantage. He then made my brother the confidant of the passion you had inspired him with, and intreated him to use his interest with me, as he found I was pretty intimate with you, to engage me to introduce him to you, which I have faithfully promised to do.

Syrenia. What! without my consent?

Delia. I hoped to be forgiven. Such an offer, my dear, is not to be rejected.

Syrenia. It is much beyond my expectations, I must confess; but the disparity between our fortunes is too great.

Delia. If he thinks your person an equivalent, it is not your business to make objections.

Syrenia. That is true: and if I could flatter myself he were really sincere— But I will consider of it.

Delia. It will be time enough for you to consider, when you have heard what he has to say; for I have promised to bring you together this evening.

Syrenia. This evening! As how?

Delia. As thus: I invite you to sup with me to-night; my brother and Leontine shall come in, as if by accident. Neither your pride nor your modesty has any thing to scruple; for I assure you I will not let even my brother know that I have previously acquainted you with any thing of the matter.

Syrenia. Well, on that condition I will come.

Delia. Indeed, my dear, I should think you very much to blame to turn your back on a prospect so highly advantageous;

advantageous; for though you are well born, well-accomplished, are handsome, and have some fortune of your own, yet the three first of these, as men now think of marriage, weigh but lightly against what they call the incumbrance of a wife; and as to the latter, you know it will not entitle you to a coach and six.

Syrenia. The justice of what you say cannot be denied; but I would do nothing that should occasion my character being called in question, nor would seem too forward, though to promote the highest expectations: therefore, my dear Delia, remember I depend on your prudence.

Delia. In this you safely may. I know too well what is owing to my sex, and the cruel aspersions men are apt to throw on our most innocent freedoms, not to be extremely cautious in avoiding giving the least room for censure.

Syrenia. Indeed, my dear, my observation on your own conduct ought to put to silence all my doubts on that score; and, whatever is the event of this affair, I shall always gratefully acknowledge your good wishes towards me.

Delia. If it succeeds, I shall be a sharer in your good fortune; as nothing gives me a more sensible satisfaction, than to have it in my power to contribute to the happiness of my friends. But I must leave you: I promised to let my brother know whether you could come or not, that he may apprize Leontine of it.

The good-natured Delia, who did not know how far Syrenia had gone with Rossano, went away in speaking these words; but I could easily perceive, by the glow on Syrenia's cheeks, how much she was transported with the purpose of her visit; and was yet more confirmed of her being so, by some disjointed soliloquies she uttered when she thought there was no witness of what she said. 'Three thousand pounds a year, and so fine a gentleman as Leontine! so handsome, so polite, so every thing that is agreeable! If he is as sincere as Delia imagines him to be, I shall have cause to bless the hour I went to Westminster Abbey; or rather, that which carried me to the Park yesterday; without which, he might never have known who I was, or where to find me, and should have lost all the advantage my good stars seem to have decreed for me.'

Here she ceased to speak, other sort of emotions rising in her mind; to which she gave a loose in this exclamation—'It was an unlucky thing I went so far with Rossano. The poor man loves me to distraction: he will certainly break his heart when he finds I have forsaken him; and, it may be, reproach me as the occasion of his death.'

On this her countenance seemed a little disconcerted, but it soon wore off; and, after a short pause, she went on thus—'I am glad, however, that no contract has passed between us. The encouragement I gave his passion, and the verbal promises I made him, need be no impediment to my accepting a better offer. It will be prudence in me, however, not to throw him off, nor give him any room to suspect I have less affection for him than I had, till I am well assured that Leontine is in earnest.'

This was enough to shew me the principle and disposition of Syrenia; both which, indeed, were so little pleasing to me, that I had not patience to stay with her any longer, but quitted her apartment with a contempt which, could she have been sensible of, would no doubt have given her some mortification.

I made one of the company that night at Delia's, however; but as it could not be expected that in a meeting which was to pass for casual there should be any conversation except on general topics, I reaped no other benefit by being present, than to be convinced that Leontine, by the glances he took every opportunity of casting at Syrenia, was indeed very much enamoured, and that she spared no pains to make him more so. The next day he went with the brother of Delia to visit her, and the succeeding one took the liberty of going thither alone, and made a declaration of his passion; which she, having well prepared herself with answers, received in such a manner, as neither to reject, nor with too much readiness encourage.

The ice once broke, he prosecuted his addresses with so much vigour and assiduity, that she thought it would be no breach of modesty to give him room to hope he was not altogether indifferent to her: by degrees, therefore, she became more kind on every visit he made; but did it with caution and reserve, neither by her looks or words forfeiting that

that character of discretion she so much valued herself upon; dropping only some hints, as if forced from her from a fund of tenderness within, which she would fain endeavour to conceal, but had not the power of doing it. Thus artful in appearing artless, Leontine, though a man of very good sense and penetration, never once suspected she was any other than such as she affected to be, plain, simple, generous, and incapable of disguising her sentiments.

It is certain, indeed, that her natural cunning was greatly assisted how to proceed on this occasion by the intelligence she daily received from Delia, to whose brother Leontine made no scruple of disburdening all that passed in his heart in relation to his passion for Syrenia. From this faithful friend she learned, that though it was not to be doubted but that Leontine was as much in love with her as man could be, yet the great respect and reverence he had for his father would not permit him to think of venturing on a thing of so much consequence as marriage, without having first obtained his consent and approbation of the woman he made choice of for a wife; and that, to this end, he had already sent two letters to his father, who lived entirely in the country; but the answers he received not being quite so satisfactory as he wished, he had wrote a third, dictated in the most passionate and pressing terms.

She could not avoid being under some very uneasy apprehensions on the score of this old gentleman, and also feared that the passion Leontine was inspired with might not of itself be strong enough to get the better of that obedience owing from him to a father's will; she therefore wished to interest his good-nature and generosity in her favour, and judged that the surest way to secure his affection was to make him a confidant of her's. But the means of accomplishing this was a difficulty she knew not presently how to get over. To confess by word of mouth she loved him, seemed too great a breach of modesty, especially as his courtship to her had not yet been of any long continuance; and to get him informed of it by Delia she thought would be the same thing, as he would doubtless imagine it was not done without her privacy and consent; besides, she knew not whether that lady would approve of such

a step. Being one day desired by him to favour him with a tune on her spinnet, she entertained him with an air out of the opera of *Artinoe*, the first in the Italian taste ever exhibited on the English stage, and, in my opinion, has been exceeded by none that have come after it. The words she sung to her instrument were these—

‘ Wanton zephyrs, softly blowing,
 ‘ Watching, catching, whispering, going,
 ‘ Bear in sighs my soul away :
 ‘ Tell Ormondo what I feel,
 ‘ Tell him how his chains I wear,
 ‘ Tell him all my grief and care;
 ‘ Gently stealing,
 ‘ And revealing,
 ‘ More of love than I can say.’

But though Leontine extolled both the musick and the voice which gave it utterance, yet he shewed no indication of imagining she had any design of flattering his passion in the choice she made of this song. This making her perceive she must be more explicit, her fertile invention soon presented her with a stratagem, which pleasing her fancy at the same time that it promised the success she aimed at, she put into immediate execution. It was this—Having a natural talent for poetry, she sat down at her escrutoire, took pen, ink, and paper, and, without being at the pains of much study, wrote the following lines—

‘ THE BREATHINGS OF A LOVE-
 ‘ SICK HEART.

‘ Wit, manly beauty, every grace combine,
 ‘ To deck the youth I love with charms
 ‘ divine.
 ‘ But, ah! my too uncautious heart take
 ‘ heed,
 ‘ Nor with gay hopes the growing passion
 ‘ feed.
 ‘ Wealth’s the chief idol that mankind
 ‘ adore,
 ‘ The sovereign power they all fall down
 ‘ before;
 ‘ My niggard fortune does that charm deny,
 ‘ And love alone will not it’s wants supply:
 ‘ Let me then guard each avenue to my
 ‘ breast,
 ‘ And bar all entrance to this dangerous
 ‘ guest;
 ‘ Left, by indulging the presumptuous flame,
 ‘ I fall the victim of despair and shame:
 ‘ But, oh! ’tis vain!—the god of love con-
 ‘ spires

' To aid my Leontine with all his fires;
 ' Speaks in his voice, and sparkles in his
 ' eyes;
 ' And what he sweetly forces, justifies.
 ' 'Tis sure determin'd in the book of fate;
 ' I must adore, ev'n though he proves un-
 ' grate.'

This paper, which she wanted him to believe was a sincere confession of the whole secret of her soul, she contrived should fall into his hands in such a manner as should have too much the appearance of chance to be liable to any suspicion of design. At his next visit, her maid being well instructed by her how to act, ran hastily into the room, and told her that the man whom she had ordered to come for his money was below. Syrenia affected not to understand what she meant, and cried—

Syrenia. What man? What money?

Maid. Mr. Shapely, Madam, your staymaker.

Syrenia. Oh, now I remember I did bid him come for his money. He takes a strange unseasonable time. People should always come in a morning on these affairs. However, I'll see if I can find his bill; and do you carry a pen and ink into the parlour, that he may write me a receipt on the back of it.

On this the maid withdrew, and Syrenia opened a little desk that stood in the dining-room, and beginning to tumble over some writings she had there, as in search of the pretended bill, dexterously slipped from among the rest the paper which contained the above recited verses, and let it fall to the ground without seeming to observe that any thing was dropped; then saying she had found what she had looked for, shut up the desk in a great hurry, begged Leontine would excuse her absence for a few moments, and went down stairs. She was no sooner gone, than Leontine, happening to cast his eyes that way, saw the paper, and took it up, as I suppose with no other intention than to deliver it to Syrenia when she should return; but it being purposely folded in such a manner that part of the writing appeared on the outside, he must have been strangely incurious indeed, if seeing it a poem, and wrote in his mistress's hand, he had forbore examining it. Never was any transport more visible than in the countenance of

Leontine while reading these delusive stanzas: his look put me in mind of the poet's words—

' Kindness has resistless charms;
 ' All things else but faintly warms;
 ' It gilds the lover's servile chain,
 ' And makes the slave grow pleas'd and
 ' vain.'

Though, by the particulars I have been repeating, the reader will easily suppose I was both an eye and an ear witness of them, yet it is utterly impossible for me to describe either the looks or attitude of the one or the other, in the joyous surprize of finding himself, as he imagined, thus extremely dear to the only woman to whom he wished to be so. She took care to stay so long below, as to give him time to read over, more than once, what she intended for his perusal. It was still in his hands when she returned; but she seemed to take no notice of it, and was beginning to apologize for her absence, by laying the blame on the impertinence of her staymaker; but Leontine, with a gesture full of rapture, interrupted her, saying—

Leontine. O, Madam, you must allow me to become an advocate for this honest tradesman, since by his fortunate detaining you I am made the happiest of mankind.

To this Syrenia, affecting not to comprehend the meaning of what he said, replied with a smile—

Syrenia. What riddle is this you are about to pose me with? I am the dullest creature in the world at giving a solution to these things.

Leontine. This paper, Madam, wafted to me by the god of love's own hand, has given me the wished-for opportunity of proving myself less unworthy of the blessing I aspire to, than your doubts suggest. No, my charming Syrenia, not all the treasures in the world could add one ray of lustre to the graces of your mind and person; 'tis those alone I covet to enjoy, and in possessing them shall be more rich than in possessing both the Indies.

While he was thus speaking, Syrenia cast her eyes upon the paper, and blushed excessively; partly, perhaps, through shame, but more through the pleasure which diffused itself through all her veins on perceiving, by the behaviour of Leontine,

entine, how well the success of her plot had answered to the intention of it. The well-dissembled confusion she was in was an excuse for her not speaking; and Leontine went on to assure her, in the most tender terms, that no consideration whatever should have the power to oblige him to withdraw that firm affection he now vowed to her; and that he hoped a very little time would put a final period to all her apprehensions on that score. What farther conversation passed between them at this time I shall forbear to repeat, as it may be easily guessed at; and proceed to the conduct of Syrenia in regard to her other lover, who the reader may think I have too long neglected.

The business which called Rossano into the country detained him there much longer than he had expected; and an unlucky fall from his horse, the very day before he intended to set out for London, occasioned a second delay to his journey. This absence of his gave Syrenia a full opportunity of entertaining her new lover; though he received every post a letter from the former, all which she did not fail to answer with that tenderness which might be expected from a woman who had promised to be his wife; still keeping close to her first maxim, not to give any umbrage to the one, till she was perfectly secure of the other. All impediments, however, being at last removed, that gentleman arrived in town on the same day that Syrenia and Leontine were engaged in the manner above recited. His impatience to see his beloved mistress carried him immediately to her lodgings: he came while his rival was with her; but her maid, well knowing how improper it was that they should meet, told him her lady was abroad; on which he went away, saying he would return in the evening, as he knew she was not accustomed to stay late from home.

He was doubtless much disappointed, but not at all suspicious of the cause; till having crossed the street, he happened to cast his eyes back upon the house, either by chance, or possibly through fondness of the place which contained the idol of his wishes. Syrenia was sitting in the window, and Leontine very near to her. Rossano had a full view of both; but Syrenia was too earnest in discourse to observe him, though he stood motionless on the spot where he was for some minutes. It seemed not

strange to him that a gentleman should be with her, though he could find no way to account why he should be denied access to her but one, which stung him to the soul. He was more than once tempted by his jealousy, as I afterwards discovered, to return, and demand of the maid a reason for his having been refused admittance; but second thoughts prevailed, and he went home, to deliberate how it would best become him to behave in such a circumstance.

Leontine staid supper; and Syrenia stepping out of the room to give some necessary orders to her maid, was informed by her that Rossano had been there, and the message he had left. This greatly disconcerted her; but, after a little pause, she recovered herself enough to give these directions—'This is very unlucky! Leontine will probably stay late: you must therefore tell Rossano that I am not yet come home, and that you believe I am gone to the play.' The maid punctually obeying these directions, Rossano only replied that, since it had happened so, he would do himself the honour to breakfast with her lady the next morning; and then departed, seemingly well satisfied. But though he forbore giving any indications of his jealousy to this girl, he doubted not but that the second repulse was owing to the same motive the first had been. Resolving, however, to be more fully convinced, he posted his servant, whom he had brought with him for that purpose, under a lamp a few doors from the house where Syrenia lodged, charging him to observe carefully who came in or out; and if he saw a gentleman in black velvet and a bag wig, to follow him wherever he went, find out his name if possible, and bring him an exact account.

Leontine was so much charmed with the discovery he had made of Syrenia's affection, that he quitted her apartment not till the night was far advanced. Rossano's servant, however, kept close to his stand, till a chair being called, he saw the gentleman his master had described go into it. He followed; and as soon as Leontine had entered the house where he lodged, and the door was shut, asked the chairmen if they knew the gentleman they had carried; but they answering in the negative, and he seeing no house open where he might enquire, could learn nothing farther that night; but early the next morning he went again,

again, and had the address to find out all the particulars that could be expected from him.

Rossano was now assured not only that he had a rival, but also a rival highly favoured by his mistress. The distraction he was in may easily be conceived; but he dissembled it on his first approach to Syrenia, whom he did not fail to visit the next morning, as he had told her maid. Syrenia, before she was informed of it, knowing very well, that missing seeing her that night, he would not let another day pass over without coming, had the artifice to tell Leontine she was obliged to go some few miles out of town to see a relation who she heard was dangerously ill.

I am not a person who live without having some business in the world, yet there are few things of consequence enough to me to have detained me from being a witness of what passed in this interview between Rossano and Syrenia, and shall present my readers with it as recorded in my faithful Tablets. Syrenia no sooner heard he was there, than she ran to the top of the stair-case to receive him, and with the greatest shew of tenderness saluted him in these terms—

Syrenia. My dear Rossano, how grieved have I been for losing the sight of you last night, after having been so long an age of time deprived of it!

Rossano. The misfortune, Madam, was wholly mine; for while I moaned your absence, you doubtless found something to amuse and entertain you. I heard you were at the play.

Syrenia. I was so: but what could I find there to compensate for the satisfaction I missed by being so unluckily from home!

Rossano. Were you at Covent Garden?

Syrenia. No, at Drury Lane. But why do you ask?

Rossano. Only for a foolish fancy.

Syrenia. Nay, I may answer myself that question. I will lay my life you went in search of me. But I chose to go in a dishabille, and sat on the back bench in Burton's box; so it was impossible for you to see me.

Rossano. Not so impossible as you imagine, Madam. But I had no need to go to either of the theatres; the object I so much languished to behold presented itself to me without my taking any pains.

These words occasioned a visible change in her countenance; she blushed excessively, cast her eyes upon the ground, and had not power to lift them up while she said only—

Syrenia. What is it you mean?

Rossano. There needs no explanation: the disorder you in vain endeavour to conceal, shews but too much how well you are acquainted with my meaning. Ah, Syrenia, Syrenia! how did I once flatter myself with an assurance that your heart was mine, inviolably mine; but now I find my absence has been fatal to me!

Syrenia. Forbear to talk thus. These suspicions are unjust to me, and cruel to yourself.

Rossano. Why, then, was I last night turned from your door? Why twice repulsed, while my more happy rival was allowed the privilege of entertaining you till midnight?

Syrenia. Who tells you this?

Rossano. My own eyes, Madam, were my first intelligencers. I saw you at that window; saw also your new favourite; and easily judged, by both your attitudes, what was the subject of your conversation. As to the rest, I was informed of it by means to which I afterwards had recourse.

The false Syrenia was now absolutely confounded. There was no giving the lye to ocular demonstration as to the first part of Rossano's charge against her; but she endeavoured to avoid the latter, by saying—

Syrenia. Well, Sir, I own I was at home, and had ordered myself to be denied; but expected not your coming, or knew you had been here till after you were gone. As for the gentleman you saw with me, 'tis your own jealous fancy alone that makes you regard him in the light of a lover.

Rossano. I grant you did not expect me; but as your servant is no stranger to the footing we are upon, she would certainly have looked on me as an exception to the general order you had given, if she had not known I was no proper person to join in the company you had above: besides, you cannot plead ignorance of my second visit, yet I was again turned back.

Syrenia. You wrong me: I protest I never heard of your being here till I was going to bed. Think no more, therefore, of such idle stuff; this is not

D d

discourse

discourse for two people who love, and have so long been absent from each other.

Rossano. Ah, Syrenia! I wish the treatment I have received would allow me to entertain you with any other. There was a time when I could be as gay, perhaps, as he who now supplants me in your esteem.

Syrenia. Still harping on the same string? Remember what the poet says—

‘No signs of love in jealous men remains,
But that which sick men have of life, their
pains.’

She had just done repeating these lines, when the tea-equipage was brought in for breakfast; and Rossano, who I could perceive by his countenance was little pleased with the trifling answers she had made to his reproaches, rose up to take his leave; on which she suddenly caught hold of his hand, and, with a well-counterfeited tenderness in her voice and eyes, said to him—

Syrenia. You will not go and leave me in this humour?

Rossano. Indeed I must. I have this moment thought of a business that requires immediate dispatch.

Syrenia. Shall I then see you in the afternoon?

Rossano. I cannot promise.

He was half way down stairs while speaking these last words; and though she followed him two or three steps, and called to him to stay, he turned not, nor even looked back upon her, but went hastily out of the house. I was resolved to see what was his intent, and accompanied him to the house of that kinswoman where he had first seen Syrenia. He was beginning to tell her what cause of complaint he had against that lady, but she stopped his mouth, by saying that she was already acquainted with every thing he had to relate; and then proceeded to inform him, that having a friend who lived opposite to Syrenia, she had learned that she entertained a new lover, who visited her almost every day, and that the neighbourhood believed it would very shortly be a match. Rossano went from this relation to his own lodgings; where, having vented some part of his rage in exclamations on the levity and ingratitude of womankind, he sat down and wrote the following lines to Leontine—

‘SIR,
‘YOU have endeavoured to supplant
‘me in the affection of the wo-
‘man I loved, and am engaged to
‘marry; I need not tell you I mean
‘Syrenia. I expect, therefore, you
‘will either resign all pretensions to her
‘under your own hand, or give such sa-
‘tisfaction as one gentleman has a right
‘to demand from another in these cases.
‘I shall attend you behind Montague
‘House at eight to-morrow morning;
‘till when, yours,

‘ROSSANO.’

This he sent immediately to Leontine; who happening to be at home, returned an answer by the bearer in these terms—

‘SIR,
‘I own myself a lover of Syrenia, but
‘I know nothing of your courtship
‘to her, nor will believe she is under
‘any engagement of the nature you
‘mention, either to you or any other
‘man; and shall be so far from resign-
‘ing my pretensions, that I will defend
‘them to the last moment of my life:
‘you may therefore rely on my meeting
‘you at the time and place appointed.
‘Yours,

‘LEONTINE.’

Rossano had scarce finished reading this billet, when a porter brought him a letter from Syrenia, the contents where-
of were these—

‘MY VERY DEAR ROSSANO,
‘YOUR behaviour this morning has
‘thrown me into disquiets which
‘might excite compassion in a heart less
‘devoted to me than I flattered myself
‘yours was. I thought the love be-
‘tween us was established on a more so-
‘lid basis, than to be shook by every puff
‘of jealous caprice; I doubt not but to
‘convince you that yours is no other.
‘If this is so lucky as to find you at
‘home, or you receive it time enough, I
‘beg to see you this evening; for I can-
‘not bear you should pass another night
‘in such cruel suspicions of your faith-
‘fully affectionate

‘SYRENIA.’

I perceived he was in some dilemma on reading this billet; he paused awhile, then said—‘My compliments to the la-
dy, and——’ Then paused again; at
last

last cried—'Tell her I am engaged this day, but will wait on her to-morrow.'

Various reflections seemed now rolling in the mind of this much-abused lover; but I left him in them, and contented myself with going the next morning to the field of battle, in order to see how the combatants would behave. They were both so punctual to the time, that it is hard to say which of them was first within the lists. Rossano, however, having some idea of Leontine, as he had seen him through Syrenia's window, advanced towards him, and said—

Rossano. I guess, Sir, you are the gentleman I invited hither.

Leontine. You are not deceived, Sir, if your name be Rossano.

Rossano. The same, Sir.

Leontine. Mine, then, is Leontine; and you find me ready to maintain my pretensions to the fair Syrenia.

Rossano. And I to assert that right which a long series of encouraged courtship and mutual vows has given me.

Leontine. This, then, is the way we must dispute the prize.

Both their swords were already drawn; and Rossano, either through superior skill or better fortune, gave his antagonist a slight wound in the side on the first pass, and on the second a much deeper on the right-arm; which occasioning a great effusion of blood, he was obliged to drop his sword; on which the other, imagining the mischief to be greater than it really proved, stepped hastily towards him, with these words—'Sir, though I might expect the justice of my cause would give me some advantage over you, I should be extremely sorry to find it attended with any bad effects; I beg, therefore, as there are scarce any chairs abroad so early, you will give me leave to support you to my lodgings, which are very near, and where you may have immediate assistance.'

Leontine accepted the offer. A surgeon was immediately called, and his cloaths stripped off in order to have his wounds examined: that on his side was not at all deep; and that on his arm happening not to be near any tendon, required little more than a tight bandage for its cure. He was advised, however, to drink some mulled wine, and then endeavour to compose himself to sleep for a few hours. Rossano, with a great deal of humanity and politeness, took

care to see this injunction performed; and, on Leontine's requesting it, sent to his lodging for fresh cloaths and linen for him to put on when he should awake.

As Rossano was retiring, to leave his guest to that repose which was thought needful for him, he saw a paper lying on the floor, which he took up, not knowing but it was something belonging to himself; but how great was his amazement when he found what it contained, this being the very verses Syrenia had wrote on Leontine, and had fortuitously been shook out of that gentleman's pocket as his cloaths were hastily thrown to the other side of the room. Till now, the love he had bore Syrenia kept him from entertaining any worse opinion of her conduct, than that it was the vanity incident to her sex, which alone had made her encourage the addresses of Leontine; but this plain proof of her inconstancy gave a sudden turn to his sentiments, and changed at once all the tenderness he ever had for her into contempt and hatred. Leontine also had some uneasy thoughts on the score of Syrenia; Rossano seemed to him to be a man of too much honour to assert a falsehood; and began to fear that himself had been deceived in his opinion of that lady's sincerity. Being less inclined to sleep than to be satisfied in this point, he rung a bell which hung by the bedside; on which Rossano, who was no farther than the next room, went in, and asked how he did; to which he replied—

Leontine. So well, that I think I need lie here no longer than till my man brings me some clean apparel, that I may rise with decency. In the mean time, Sir, should take it as a favour you would let me know how far I have been guilty of injustice to you in regard of Syrenia. In your billet to me, you mention an engagement: if it be so, I was perfectly ignorant of it, and, at that time, imagined I had strong reasons for disbelieving it; otherwise, I do assure you, Sir, not all my passion for that lady should have made me attempt to disunite your loves.

Rossano. Though it may seem ungenerous to boast a lady's favours, as I have no other way to justify my rash proceedings towards you, be pleased to read that letter.

In speaking this, he presented to Leontine the letter he had received from Syrenia

renia the day before; which that gentleman had no sooner looked over, than he cried out, with the greatest surprize—

Leontine. Good Heaven! Why this was dated but yesterday!

Rossano. Yes, Sir; and wrote on account of my testifying some jealousy on your being with her the evening before. But I have now done with that idle passion, and can now resign my claim with as much calmness as I would lately have maintained it with eagerness.

Leontine. Is it possible you can be in earnest!

Rossano. Were Syrenia more beautiful than she is, the enjoyment of her person, without her heart, could give me no happiness; and had this paper, which accidentally fell from your pocket in the hurry this morning, happened sooner into my hands, I should not have proceeded as I have done.

In speaking this, he gave Leontine the paper he had taken up: the other immediately saw what it was; and, receiving it with a smile, made this reply—‘I thank you, Sir; but I assure you I am not at all vain of these verses, as they serve only to prove that the lady was willing to be double armed; and in case one lover should fail, to be provided with another.’

After this they began to enter into a very free discussion on the conduct of Syrenia towards them both; and there now appeared so much deceit, mean artifice, ingratitude, and perfidy, as well to the one as the other, that it is hard to say which of them entertained the most despicable notions of her: in fine, they agreed to resent the impositions she had practised on them in such a manner as some of my fair readers, how greatly soever they may condemn Syrenia, will not, perhaps, easily absolve them for.

The servant of Leontine being arrived with the things his master had ordered to be brought, that gentleman rose, and got himself dressed; and Rossano in the mean time employed himself in gathering up all the letters he had received from Syrenia, and made them up in a large packet, and wrote on the cover—

‘Amorous billets from a lady of a very extraordinary character.’

They went in two chairs to the house

where Syrenia lodged; and the door being opened, rushed up stairs without any ceremony, and even into the dining-room where she was sitting. Leontine was the first that entered: she rose to receive him; but seeing his arm in a scarf, cried out—

Syrenia. Oh, Sir! what accident has befallen you?

Leontine. No unlucky one, Madam. I have indeed received two slight wounds on your account; but I bless the hand that gave them, since they have been the means of curing one of a more dangerous nature in my heart.

She had no time to ask what he meant by these words; Rossano was now in the room, and rejoined to what the other had said in this manner—

Rossano. My heart is also in a pretty good condition too; for though I have lost a mistress, I have gained a friend, from whom I have reason to hope more sincerity. You see, Madam, two persons together, whom doubtless you wished to keep separate, while we had separate interests: but we have now agreed; and as we lately joined to persecute you with our addresses, now join in the resolution of troubling you no more.

Leontine. I have nothing to add, Madam, to what my friend has delivered, but to restore this paper; which can be of no use to me, and may be of some to you; as, change but the name, the picture may suit some happier man.

Rossano. And I return those letters you have from time to time favoured me with.

He then laid down the packet, at the same time Leontine did the verses, upon a table. Syrenia was all this while immovable as a statue: she had found, from their first entrance, that they had compared notes; that she was exposed, her arts laid open, and her hopes irrecoverably lost with both. Fain would she have spoke, but had not power; and all she could utter at last was—

Syrenia. Mighty well!—So, then, I am to be insulted?

Rossano. No, Madam, your birth and beauty are your protection; and had your mind been equal to either, neither of us, I believe, would have broke his chain, or even wished to regain that liberty





liberty we now have so much cause to triumph in.

Leontine. Come, Sir, you see the lady is disconcerted: let us leave her to meditate on this adventure; it may be of service in some future one.

Rossano. With all my heart.—A good husband to you, Madam.

Leontine. I join in the same wish.
—Your servant, Madam.

They departed with these words, and I staid not long after them; the sight of Syrenia's despair, how justly soever she had brought it on herself, giving more pain than satisfaction.

END OF THE SEVENTH BOOK.



THE
INVISIBLE SPY.

BOOK VIII.

CHAP. I.

CONTAINS A VERY BRIEF DETAIL
OF SUCH OCCURRENCES AS PRE-
SENTED THEMSELVES TO THE
AUTHOR'S OBSERVATION IN AN
EVENING'S INVISIBLE RAMBLE
THROUGH SEVERAL PARTS OF
THIS METROPOLIS.



It has often been a matter of very great concern to me, and I believe must be the same to every thinking mind, to see how some people are continually hurried and busied about mere trifles, of no manner of consequence to themselves, or scarce to any body else; while all the duties of religion, all the regard for the welfare of their most particular friends, all love of country, and even the dearest interests of their own families, are totally neglected. What judgment can we form of a person of this cast, but that he has a vacuum in his head ready to be filled up with the first toy that presents itself; and not being endowed with a strength of reason sufficient to direct his choice, suffers himself to be engrossed by such things as he finds make most noise in the world, not such as have

most relation to his own affairs, either as to fortune or reputation?

Can there be a sight more farcical than for a man who, without any petition to prefer, or suit to solicit; in fine, without any call or business whatsoever, is continually cringing at the levee of a minister of state; and, when the compliments are paid, and the circle is dismissed, runs through the whole round of his acquaintance, reporting where he has been and what he has seen, sagaciously remarking on every nod, wink, or smile, of the great man, and finding mystery even in the tye of his wig, or the loose or strait buttoning his coat?

Another, whose affairs at home perhaps are involved in the utmost perplexities, shall pass the best part of his time among the jobbers in 'Change Alley, go from coffee-house to coffee-house, enquire of every broker he meets with the price of stocks, in which he has no share, or money to purchase any; and be more solicitous in finding out the uses to which the Sinking-fund is appropriated, than for the means of extricating himself out of his present difficulties.

A third values himself much upon being a great connoisseur in politicks, regifters all the publick papers from year to year, pretends to reconcile all the contradictions

traditions they contain, and to discover some latent meaning in every paragraph; and takes more pains to unriddle their imaginary enigmas, than a poor servitor at the university does to translate Perseus for a rich student who pays, and fathers the labour of his brain.

Others have a taste for building, are extremely curious in ornamenting the structures they cause to be erected with carvings, paintings, and such like superficial beauties; but never once examine how the foundation is laid, or whether the pompous outworks may not be liable to sink very soon into a heap of rubbish. Some employ their whole cares on the breeding and well-managing their horses, hounds, and game-cocks, leaving the education of their sons entirely unregarded.

Impossible is it to enumerate the various trifles with which too many, even among the highest class of life, suffer themselves not only to be amused, but wholly taken up; but I think, without any danger of being accused of too much severity, one may justly say, with Shakespeare, of such men, that—

- ‘ The earth has bubbles, as the water
‘ hath,
- ‘ And these are some of them.’

In a word, ‘ Much Ado about Nothing,’ is a play so universally acted in this town, that one can go to very few places without being witness of some scenes of it. As insignificant, however, as these people may seem by the description I have given of them, and as in effect they really are, they are yet of more consequence to the publick than is generally believed, or than they themselves, with all the stock of vanity they are usually possessed of, are capable of imagining. This, though it may be thought a paradox, will be easy for me to make appear; as thus—These unjudging creatures, for I have already proved them to be such, are frequently made the tools by which evil and designing men fashion out their ends. When those in power have any thing on foot from which they find it necessary to divert the attention of the nation, it is but throwing out some whisper, though of ever so absurd and ridiculous a nature, among the people I am speaking of, and they will immediately ring it in the ears of the populace till it becomes the cry, and every argu-

ment that truth and reason can alledge is deafened with the noise.

An experience of many years, joined with a diligent observation of the world, has convinced me, beyond all doubt, that these inconsiderates, without being sensible of the mischief they do, have been, and daily are, the instruments of propagating the most infamous scandals, gross falsties, and base aspersions, on the great and good; as also the most ridiculous and idle stories, invented and calculated by men of more thinking heads, to amuse and divert the attention of the publick from what most demands it's regard. A glaring instance of this latter kind now takes up the town; all mouths are full of it, all ears open to it: but it appears to me that there are few eyes clear enough to discern the secret ground-work of this mountain of absurdities, and on what motive it was erected. I think it not my province, however, nor shall presume to inform the judgment of any one in this point; but shall only relate a passage I happened to be witness of, which every one is at liberty to descant upon as he shall think proper.

Being one day on the other side of the Royal Exchange, where some business I had there being dispatched sooner than I expected, it came into my head to call in at a certain celebrated coffee-house, which I had been told was frequented by a great number of the most eminent and wealthy citizens; but as I had no acquaintance with them, and some other more substantial reasons for not appearing in *propria persona*, I chose to go in my Invisible capacity. Pursuant to this resolution, I stepped into the first obscure alley I could find, and there girded on my precious Belt; which, as well as my Tablets, I seldom went out without taking with me, and then hastened to the place I mentioned.

I found the room very full of company, most of whom were of that sect of dissenters from the established church which are under the denomination of Presbyterians. I would not here be understood to mean any thing in ridicule of those gentlemen; for I love and revere every man of real virtue and good sense, be he of what persuasion soever. How far the persons I have just now occasion to speak of answer to either of these characters I will not pretend to say; let their own words testify. I shall, according
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to the phrase of the inspired writer, set a guard upon my mouth, that I offend not with my lips. But to proceed—

Three or four, who I afterwards perceived were leading men among them, were engaged in a very warm dispute with a gentleman, who endeavoured, with a great deal of spirit, to expose the gross absurdities and falshood of a cause they took upon them to maintain, and with a kind of magisterial air attempted to enforce the belief of in others. The odds appeared to me at first, I confess, a little ungenerous; but I was the more strengthened in this opinion, when I heard the manner in which they delivered their arguments, and that were urged in favour of one of the most preposterous and ridiculous complaints that ever engaged the attention of any men of common sense. After saying this, I think it is needless to add, it was the affair of Squires and Canning. As I am utterly unacquainted with the names either of those who defended the cause of the latter, or of him who treated it with contempt, I shall distinguish the one by that of Assertors, and the other by that of Opponent. The conversation which passed on both sides, after I had got a convenient place to post myself, and had spread my Tablets, I shall give the publick a faithful transcript of, as taken from those unerring testimonies, and was as the reader will find underwritten.

First Assertor. I am surprized, Sir, you should rack your brain for arguments against the cause of helpless innocence and virtue in distress.

Second Assertor. 'Tis barbarous! 'tis cruel! Where shall we find an object of compassion, if Betty Canning is not one? We know her, Sir.

Third Assertor. Aye, she is of our congregation; has always been a diligent frequenter of the meeting-house, and fervent in her devotions.

Opponent. So, because she is of your congregation, it naturally follows she must be chaste; the lambs of your flock never go astray. But I forbear to make any reflection on this score, and shall only say, I never shall give credit to a story so full of inconsistencies and improbabilities as this which has been forged by her and her accomplices.

First Assertor. Sir, there is no reasoning against fact. She has sworn to the truth of it before a magistrate, and that magistrate has testified his belief of it.

Opponent. Yes, the story she told was romantick; it suited his taste; he thought it might be a proper subject to work up into a farce or puppet-show; so was willing to promote the credibility of it.

First Assertor. Mere spite and scandal.

Opponent. Not at all; and I doubt not but the imposition will be fully laid open by another magistrate, superior in every degree to him who takes her part.

First Assertor. Sir, it is profane and impious in him, or you, or any man, to espouse the cause of a wicked old hag, a vagabond, a gipsy, such as Mary Squires; and a known instrument of libidinous pleasures, such as Mother Wells.

Opponent. Gentlemen, I have nothing to alledge in defence of these creatures, but that, however guilty they may have been, or continue to be, in other respects, they are entirely innocent in this they are accused of.

First Assertor. No, no; 'tis impossible.

Opponent. Saying a thing does not prove it to be so. But give me leave only to offer a few queries, in relation to some of the many inconsistencies in the tale told by that idle wench Betty Canning.

Second Assertor. Do so; we shall know how to answer them.

Opponent. First, then, supposing her to have been robbed, in the manner she pretends, by two ruffians, what could induce fellows who live upon the spoil, after having taken from her all they found worth taking, to quit the pursuit of other booty, and lose their time in dragging her into the country, only to throw her into the house, and then leave her there; for she does not accuse them of making any attempt upon her chastity?

First Assertor. As to that, it is highly probable they might be seduced by Mother Wells to bring the first young woman they could meet with to her house, in order to be made a sacrifice to her mercenary views, and the lust of some vile fellow.

Opponent. Then they would certainly have chosen an object of a more tempting aspect, or would have deserved little for their pains: but let that pass. If it were as you imagine, would any woman, who it is said has long been in practice in the seducing trade, have behaved

haved towards the prey brought into her clutches in the fashion she did to Betty Canning? Would she not rather have soothed the frightened maid, revived her drooping spirits with good eating and drinking, promised her fine cloaths, and then introduced some man to her, who might have allured her to the sin she aimed to make her guilty of? Surely the way to tempt her to be a prostitute was not to lock her up alone in a wild, desolate room, without a bed to lie upon, or any other refreshment than a little bread and water; such usage, one must think, was intended to mortify, not excite a carnal inclination.

First Assessor. Sir, I am grieved, greatly grieved in spirit, to find you so ignorant of the force of virtue. I tell you, Sir, that the courage and resolution of this virgin struck such an awe into the minds of those profligate wretches she was placed among, that they had not the power of putting their wicked designs in execution: Heaven, indeed, for a trial of her patience, permitted them to distress her helpless innocence, but not to destroy it.

Opponent. Very extraordinary, truly! But pray, Sir, why did this suffering saint remain so long under the roof of such abandoned creatures, since all accounts agree, that in three days, nay, in three hours, after her confinement, she had the same opportunity of making her escape as at the time she pretends to effect it?

Second Assessor. Her eyes were not open to the means of her deliverance till that blessed moment: it was ordained she should undergo the persecution she did, in order to make her virtue more triumphant over sin and shame.

Opponent. Oh, gentlemen, these arguments will never be swallowed any where but in a conventicle.

Third Assessor. Sir, they will always have their due weight with every one but a reprobate.

Opponent. How, Sir!

The Opponent was so much incensed at these words, that he started from his seat, and was about to reply with his fist; but some of the more moderate part of the company interposed, and prevented the mischief that might otherwise have ensued. By their persuasions he sat down again; and the dispute would doubtless have been renewed, it may be

with greater vehemence than before, if a drawer from a neighbouring tavern had not luckily come, and told him that two gentlemen, whose names he mentioned, desired to speak with him: on which he went away, perhaps to the great satisfaction of the assertors of Betty Canning's cause; who, if he had staid and continued his queries, might probably have been a little puzzled to find answers to them.

During the debate I have been repeating, every one in the room kept a profound silence; but afterwards the conversation became general; several other subjects were started by particular persons, but they were not listened to: the majority seemed to have their heads so full of Betty Canning, that they could scarce think or speak of any thing beside. It is true, indeed, they did not all give credit to her story; yet the positiveness with which they heard it affirmed, made the least credulous divided in their thoughts, and afraid to pass a judgment either on the one or the other side of the question. The reader will doubtless naturally suppose, that it was impossible for me to live in the world, and have any acquaintance in it, without having heard, long before I came to this place, much talk of Elizabeth Canning, her pitiful distress, miraculous preservation and escape, and all the other prodigies of that amazing story.

It is true, indeed, I was a stranger to no part of it; but then my conversation being chiefly among the gay part of the town, I was not much surprized that people who can find very little to employ their thoughts should be fond of a tale which had so much of the marvelous in it; as children, before they arrive at years capable of being instructed in more solid matters, listen with pleasure to their nurses stories of giants, fairies, and enchanted castles: as such I regarded all they said, and thought no farther of it. But when I heard grave citizens, men of business, of a sedate deportment, and good understanding in other things, argue with serious countenances on such a heap of wild absurdities, I cannot say whether my astonishment or indignation had most dominion over my faculties; but this I know, that both together destroyed all the little stock of patience I am master of, and would not suffer me to stay any longer to listen to

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those insignificant debates which I found were likely to continue among this company.

CHAP. II.

RELATES SOME FARTHER INCIDENTS OF A PRETTY PARTICULAR NATURE, WHICH FELL UNDER THE AUTHOR'S OBSERVATION IN THE SAME EVENING'S INVISIBLE PROGRESSION.

THOSE turbulent emotions which the scene I had just come from being witness of had raised in me, being somewhat quieted by air and walking, I had the curiosity to call in at another great coffee-house, hoping I should find there something to give a turn to the present disposition of my mind; but I found that the remains of my ill-humour were not to be so soon dissipated as I had imagined. Here was indeed a vast deal of company; clerks in publick offices, lawyers, physicians, tradesmen, and some few divines, composed the promiscuous assembly: but all were engaged on the same dirty, draggle-tail subject, as one of our news-writers justly terms it; the names of Betty Canning, the Gipsy, and Mother Wells, resounded from each quarter of the crowded room, and the cause then depending between these creatures made the whole conversation at every table.

Here I would not be at the trouble of opening my Tablets, easily perceiving that nothing worthy of being recorded in them, or of communicating to the publick, was likely to ensue; and also that the smallest part of time I should waste in this company, would be paying too dear for any discourses I should hear from them. Accordingly I left the house after having staid there about seven minutes; but had not reached the next street, before a confused noise behind obliged me to stand up in the porch of a door till the hubbub was passed by.

The occasion of this uproar presently appeared. It was a poor fellow carried on a bier, with very little signs of life in him; his face covered with blood, which issued from his nose and mouth; his cloaths torn, that the naked flesh appeared in many places, but so deformed with bruises, that it could scarce be known for what it was; a mixed rabble of men,

women, and children, followed, shouting, hallooing, and crying, it was good enough for him, and that they were glad he had got his reward.

I was startled at so much inhumanity, for I thought nothing could excuse such cruel treatment, though I doubted not but the fellow had been guilty of some atrocious crime: but I was soon undeceived in this point, and let into the whole affair; which was no other than a quarrel this fellow had entered into on account of Canning.

I had now no design in my head, no particular course to steer; but as I was entirely free from any engagement that evening, and thought it too soon to go home, I rambled from one street to another for a considerable time, yet without meeting any one thing sufficient to tempt my curiosity to make a farther enquiry into. Any observing reader may reasonably imagine, that the little satisfaction I had been able to reap in the visits I had made at the two coffee-houses I had been already in, would have hindered me from going into another, and indeed I was of that opinion myself: but I soon found I was mistaken, and so will he; I really ventured into a third; but the motive which excited me to do so was this—

As I was passing by, I perceived through the windows—for then the candles within were lighted up—several gentlemen with newspapers before them, on which they seemed to be discoursing with each other with a great deal of seriousness and gravity. As I have naturally an extreme passion for knowing the affairs of the world, those of Europe especially, I thought it highly eligible in me to hear what was said upon them by persons who had the appearance of some understanding in them. At the first table I came to were six or seven gentlemen, most of whom were some way or other concerned in the British herring-fishery: but though they talked very learnedly on the subject, it suited not my taste; so staid not long with them, but adjourned to the next company. These were merchants, who I found were greatly disconcerted at an article they had been just reading in relation to the strict engagements the French had entered into with the Indians, and the daily incursions those mis-called friends and allies made on the English colonies: but as I cannot pretend to any skill in commerce,

commerce, I did not spread my Tablets to receive the impression of their discourse; so can only say, in general, that they made very heavy complaints, and cried out, that if speedy care were not taken to put a stop to those proceedings, trade must be ruined, and our settlements in that part of the world utterly destroyed.

The third table was filled with persons who seemed to be of no avocation, nor at all interested in any branch of business or publick affairs, but talked of every thing they had been reading merely as things which afforded matter for conversation. On my joining them, the magnanimity of the Prussian monarch was the topick; they extolled his wisdom, his bravery, his temperance, his clemency, the encouragement he gave to merit wheresoever he found it; and all unanimously agreed that he was the father of his people, a blessing to the land he governed, and a pattern to his fellow-rulers of the earth. The just admiration I ever had of this truly great and most amiable prince, exclusive of that regard due to him as so near a relation to our gracious sovereign, would certainly have kept me at that table as long as the company had continued speaking on so agreeable a subject, if I had not been hurried from it by a propensity, I believe more or less natural to all mankind, that of being most eager to explore what is hid from us with most care.

I observed at a little table, which was placed at one corner of the room, a good distance from the others, two elderly persons, who seemed very earnest in discourse on some important and secret affair. By the winks, nods, and other significant gestures, I doubted not but that they were profound politicians, and were discussing some extraordinary transaction of the cabinet. Their heads were pretty close together, and they spoke in so low a voice as to render it impossible to be heard by any one except each other: but this precaution had no efficacy when once my wonderful Tablets were displayed; which had this excellent property, of receiving the impression of whatever was said within the distance of nine yards, though uttered in the most soft whispers. On my drawing near to them, they seemed a little impatient for the coming of a person who they expected, and who presently

after appeared. As soon as he had seated himself, the following dialogue ensued—

First Man. Oh, Mr. Slycraft, I am glad you are come! We were beginning to think you long.

Slycraft. I am somewhat beyond my hour, indeed; but I assure you nothing could have made me so but the good of the cause.

Second Man. Your zeal and diligence are not to be doubted. But let us hear what success your endeavours have met with.

Slycraft. Truly not so much as I hoped. I do not think there is a more difficult thing in the world than getting people to subscribe: I have been half the town over, and have been able to procure no more than three.

First Man. Then I hope they are fat ones?

Slycraft. Pretty well, as times go. Credulous Woodcock, Esq. has set his name for twenty guineas.

First Man. Very handsome! Five or six hundred such as he would do the business.

Slycraft. Aye; but where shall we find them?

Second Man. Well, but who are the others?

Slycraft. Then there is Mr. Simon Goosly, the haberdasher, ten guineas; but has promised to prevail on some friends of his to set their names very generously.

Second Man. I dare say he will do all he can. But have you seen Mrs. Waver?

Slycraft. Yes; but she still desires a little more time to consider; says she will enquire farther into the affair, and hear what her friends think of it: and all I could get from her was an assurance, that if she found it proper to subscribe at all, she would not set her name for less than an hundred pieces.

First Man. Then we may be pretty certain of her; for I know she will be directed by Mr. Cantwell, the Non-conformist preacher, who labours all he can to promote the cause in question.

Second Man. Have you yet found an opportunity of talking with the orator?

Slycraft. I was with him above an hour; and when I had once convinced him that he should find his account in it, he gave me his word and honour that he

would rant and roar till his chapelechoes in favour of the party.

First Man. That is well. All engines must be set to work, or the town will grow cool on this business, and begin to renew their clamour against the Jew bill, &c. The spirit of the people will have vent on something or another, and you know it behoves us to keep them silent on those scores: nothing ever did it more effectually than this we are upon. But it must be kept up for a time. I could wish, methinks, we had the Wesleys on our side.

Second Man. 'Tis a vain attempt. They are now grown too rich to accept of a small gratuity; and I much question whether their exhortations would answer the expence.

Slycraft. I am of your opinion. Besides, you know there is a person who can influence their congregations as much as any thing they can hear from the pulpit. But I will tell you what I have done to-day; I have engaged a clergyman of the established church to write a pamphlet in behalf of the cause we have in hand.

First Man. A clergyman of the established church employ his pen in behalf of such a cause! Pr'ythee, Slycraft, how didst thou work upon him? It must certainly be by some very extraordinary method.

Slycraft. The promise of a small present at first wrought upon his necessities; but on my telling him who and who were concerned in this business, and the motives which induced them to be so, the hopes of having a good fat living made him wholly ours.

First Man. Admirable!

Second Man. But may we depend upon his secrecy?

Slycraft. Never doubt that, as his own interest is concerned.

First Man. Hitherto things go pretty swimmingly on our side. But let me see the subscription-book: I have received five guineas to-day from Mr. Prim, and must insert his name.

Till now I was at the greatest loss, as it is probable the reader will also be, to know what all this meant, or in whose favour, or on what account, the subscription they talked of was raised; but on Mr. Slycraft's delivering the book to his friend, I looked over the shoulder of the latter as he opened it, and saw, in

the first leaf, by way of title-page, these words, wrote in a very fair hand—

'A List of those worthy Persons who
' have subscribed to the Relief of
' Elizabeth Canning.'

The names underwritten were too numerous to be inserted; I shall therefore only say, that the sum of what was raised by their subscription amounted to little less than a thousand pounds. Monstrous abuse of charity! preposterous benevolence! which will hereafter reflect more shame than honour on the benefactors. 'Good God!' said I to myself, 'in an age when numberless, nameless miseries, abound; when all our prisons labour with the weight of wretches confined within their walls, many for small debts which their necessities obliged them to contract, and some by unjust and malicious prosecutions; while every parish, nay almost every street, affords objects of real distress; while a girl sprung from the lowest dregs of the people, bred up to toil, a drudge, one of the very meanest class of servants, receives donations which she as little knows how to make a proper use of as to deserve!—a girl who, if she had really suffered all she pretends to have done, would indeed have had a claim to justice against those who had wronged her, but none to the bounties so lavishly bestowed upon her.'

These kind of meditations would doubtless have accompanied me to my own door, if they had not been interrupted, as well as my course towards home, by an unexpected accident, which the reader will find faithfully related in the succeeding chapter.

CHAP. III.

PRESENTS THE READER WITH AN
ADVENTURE OF MUCH MORE IMPORTANCE TO THE PUBLICK
THAN ANY CONTAINED IN THE
TWO LAST FOREGOING CHAPTERS.

THE human heart is liable to many bad propensities, which, if not timely corrected by reason, shoot forth into practice, and become vices. But of these there are two sorts; the one born with

with us, and part of our nature; the other imbibed by the fatal prevalence of example, and rooted in us by custom, which is a second nature. Those born with us, as the indulging them is attended with some pleasure, urge in their defence the unconquerable desire of gratifying the senses: the lustful man pleads the warmth of his constitution, and the strong allurements of beauty; the soul of the ambitious triumphs and exults on every degree of power he gains over his fellow-creatures; the miser thinks himself happy in counting over his bags, and being master of a thing that will purchase all things else; and the epicure feels no care, no sorrow, while he is emptying the full-charged goblet, and palating the delicious viand. But what has the blasphemer, the profane swearer, or the gamester, to alledge in his vindication? These are crimes in which nature has no part, nor are the senses any way concerned in them, as they neither excite nor feel any satisfaction in them. One might therefore be apt to imagine, that men thus guilty sinned merely for the sake of sinning. But I will not allow myself to think that there are many so impudently daring; a few distinguished persons will serve to bring up a mode, and every one knows that at present an indiscriminate imitation is the reigning folly of the English nation.

These were reflections which occurred to me after I came home, as I was about to transcribe the remaining part of my evening's progress out of my precious Tablets. I had some farther thoughts on the occasion, but as they might seem more proper for the pulpit than a work of this nature, I shall add no more, but proceed to the narrative of that adventure which gave rise to them.

As I was passing, in my way home, through a street of no very good repute, two persons, from a little narrow alley, bolted hastily upon me, to the no small danger of my Invisibleness, if an agility not very common with me had not that instant enabled me to give a sudden spring, by which I avoided the rush I must otherwise have received. They went on before me. The night was extremely dark; neither moon nor stars to assist the visual ray: but, by the help of some candles burning in a shop not yet shut up, I distinguished that the one was very richly dressed, and had much the appearance of a man of fashion; and that

the other was a fellow I had often seen on many occasions, and whose character I was perfectly acquainted with.

Scarce is there a greater villain to be found in low life: I say in low life, because should any persons in authority, or dignified with titles—which Heaven forbid!—even appear in this nation, to deserve such black denominations, their crimes would, like their ranks, be distinguished; and, though placed in an orb too high to be reached by the just vengeance of their oppressed fellow-creatures, would doubtless incur what Mr. Addison makes Cato prophetically say in relation to Julius Cæsar, on his endeavouring to subvert the old Roman constitution, and become absolute and perpetual dictator—

‘ Sure there are bolts in the right-hand of
‘ Jove,
‘ Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the
‘ man
‘ Who owes his greatness to his country’s
‘ ruin.’

But to return to my little knave. The wretch is now called Mr. Makeplea; he was formerly servant to a lawyer whom I employed in several affairs I had the misfortune to be engaged in. Living with that gentleman a considerable time, he picked up some scraps of law, and all the terms and phrases of that abstruse science, by rote; knew how to take out a writ, set an officer to work, fill up a bail-bond, and procure evidences in a dubious cause. With this fund he had the impudence, after his master's death, to pretend he had been his clerk; got himself entered as an attorney, and has ever since practised as such. His sole business, however, as may be easily supposed, has always been among the very meanest sort of people; fomenting litigious quarrels, and then making them up, after having drained the purses on both sides. I could not, therefore, avoid being amazed at seeing him in the company I now did; but my wonder soon ceased on hearing, as I was close at their heels, the following discourse between them—

Makeplea. It is very lucky, Mr. Coaxum, that I happened to be at home when you came. There are some of the profession who would have scrupled to undertake this business; but, for my part, I am always ready to venture every thing to serve my friends.

Coaxum.

Coaxum. My dear Makeplea, you never lost any thing, nor ever shall, by our fraternity. I know there are some who will sneak their heads out of the collar, and leave their lawyer in the lurch.

Makeplea. Aye, faith, I narrowly escaped the pillory once. A vile dog who, after I had procured him three evidences, pretended a panick in his conscience, threw up his cause, and suffered himself to be nonsuited.

Coaxum. You know we scorn such doings. And I can tell you, this will be a pretty good job to you. We drained the fool's pocket of above an hundred pieces before we plaid upon credit; so that there is enough in bank to make you a handsome present for your trouble.

Makeplea. Well, but concerning this reversion: I hope he has lost enough to give an air of justice—that is, a *quantum sufficit*, for the making over his estate after the decease of his father?

Coaxum. Upwards of a thousand pounds; besides a gold watch and a diamond-ring, which he seems to set a high value upon. The two last Count Cogdy has agreed to sell him again at a great price; so that, all together, the sum will amount to a sufficient purchase of the reversion of an estate of four hundred a year; especially as the present possessor is not above fifty, and may live a long time. Besides, we hear the young fellow is going to be married to a woman of fortune; so that the deeds may be made redeemable. We do not regard his dirty acres, the ready rhino is what we want; and he may pay the money out of his wife's fortune, and be clear of us again.

Makeplea. Oh, then it will be a mortgage, rather than a sale. Who are with him?

Coaxum. Only Count Cogdy, Jack Hazard, and Tom Wheedle.

Makeplea. They cannot be witnesses, as I suppose they are parties concerned.

Coaxum. We are equal sharers in the booty; but the money was lost wholly to the count. However, there will be no want of witnesses; the landlord of the house and his son will set their hands.

These words brought them to a door, which being opened at the first knock by one of the most ill-looking fellows that ever disgraced human nature, they went through a long, dark, narrow passage,

into a back-parlour; where I accompanied them, and was witness of a scene somewhat like what I remember to have seen some years ago in a play of Mrs. Centlivre's, called the Gamester. Count Cogdy, as he was called, sat leaning his arm upon a table, in a careless posture; Jack Hazard was walking backwards and forwards in the room humming an old tune; a gentleman, whose name I had not yet heard, had thrown himself across two chairs, with all the tokens of despair about him; Tom Wheedle stood near him, and, as we came in, was endeavouring to give him some consolation, in these terms—'Pr'ythee, dear Clerimont, do not be thus disconcerted; I have lost as much as you twenty times over, and as often recovered it again; these things will happen to gentlemen that play. Fortune, indeed, has been against you to-night, but may not always be so; one lucky hit at another time may bring all back.'

Clerimont made no answer, nor seemed to regard what he said, till hearing the name of Makeplea, and Count Cogdy beginning to instruct him in the business he was to do, that unfortunate gentleman started up at once, and staring somewhat wildly in the face of Makeplea, cried to him—

Clerimont. Are you the fiend who is to convey my soul, that is, my estate, into the regions of eternal darkness, whence it can never, never more return?

Makeplea. What do you mean, Sir?

Cogdy. The gentleman is only a little out of humour.—Faith, Mr. Clerimont you do not do well to behave in this fashion. You have lost some money indeed, but you have lost it fairly. I never take an advantage of any man, and shall be ready to give you your revenge at any time.

Hazard. Aye, I will say that for the count; he scorns a mean thing.

Cogdy. I believe there is not a more unlucky fellow at play in the world than myself, though I have happened to win to-night: yet, as I said before, I am ready to give Mr. Clerimont an opportunity of retrieving all he has lost whenever he pleases. For my part, I would stake all I am worth against a pair of shoe-buckles, rather than any gentleman should think I imposed upon him.

Coaxum. No, no, you are above any such thing.

Hazard.

Hazard. We all know that,

Makeplea. Come, come, gentlemen, this is doing nothing; all loss of time, and every moment of mine is precious. There are two noblemen now waiting for me at the Garter tavern. Pray proceed to the business: let me know how the deeds I have brought with me are to be filled up.

Cogdy. I will tell you immediately; but first I must do justice to this gentleman.—Here, Sir, are the watch and ring you staked; the value of which, you know, is added to the other sums.

Clerimont put the one in his pocket, and the other on his finger, with a deep sigh; and the count went on repeating to Makeplea the substance of what he was to write. The latter, at the end of every article, demanded of Clerimont whether he agreed to it; to which he sullenly replied—‘I do; I see no other remedy.’ The lawyer having dispatched his part, Clerimont was desired to sign and seal: he did both; but with such a trembling hand, and visible distraction of mind, that my heart bled for him. In delivering the writings to the count, he said—

Clerimont. There, Sir—I suppose this is all that is required of me, and I may now depart?

Cogdy. No, no, we must have a bottle and a bird together, to shew we are all still good friends.

Hazard. Aye, and each of us a wench, too. I know where there is a covey of as young, pretty, plump, partridges, as any in Covent Garden.

Clerimont. Rot your bottle, and your bird, and your wenches! I have done with them, and you, and the world, for ever!

In speaking these words he snatched up his sword and hat, and ran directly out of the house. As for me, I had as little inclination as himself to stay in the company of such blood-suckers; but having never seen him before, I was curious to know somewhat more of him, and also how he would behave when alone, and at liberty to ruminate on the misfortune he had plunged himself into; so followed his steps with all the speed I could.

It was not difficult to keep pace with him; for though he gained ground of me at first, he soon halted, and gave me an opportunity of coming up with him. Never did man traverse the streets with more disordered motions; crossing the way an hundred times, I believe, within

the space of half a quarter of a mile, without having the least occasion to do so. Sometimes he would run as if in pursuit of somebody, and sometimes stand quite still. And it was well the darkness of the night befriended him, otherwise whoever had met him would doubtless have taken him to be mad.

In this fashion he went part of the Strand, and turned down one of those streets leading to the water-side. He stopped about the middle of it at a door, and had his hand upon the knocker; but a sudden thought coming that instant into his head, he left it, without making the signal for admittance, and walked slowly to the end of the street; where leaning on a little wall that overlooks the river, he remained for some minutes in the most thoughtful and contemplative attitude; then said to himself—‘How profound, how solemn, is the silent scene! inviting to a certain rest from misery and shame! Here, within the bosom of this friendly element, may all my follies and misfortunes be hid for ever from the talking world!’

I feared nothing less would ensue, than that I should see him presently attempt to do as his words had hinted; I therefore drew as near to him as I could, in order to prevent so bad an effect of his despair. Here I cannot help remarking, that if the thing had happened as I expected, and Clerimont had found himself snatched from his fate by an Invisible hand, he would doubtless have imagined his preservation owing to the interposition of some Supernatural Being, and reported it as a miracle.

But how he would have acted on such an odd occasion, is uncertain; for, after a pause, and disburthening himself of some few sighs, he started from the posture he had been in, and cried—‘No, it must not be; I have some business still for life—revenge on the curst cheat, the villain, that has undone me! Love, too, demands something from me; but by what means I shall repay that mighty debt, I know not. Oh, Charlotte! Charlottel on how lost a wretch hast thou bestowed thy heart!’

These words were uttered with a groan which seemed to cleave his breast, and were the last I heard from him at that time. He turned back, and went hastily to the house where he had first stopped; the door was opened on his knocking; and

and too suddenly shut again for me to have entered with him if I had intended it; but the variety of accidents presented to me in this evening's ramble, had already sufficiently filled my head, and made me glad to retire to my repose.

CHAP. IV.

RELATES SOME PASSAGES WHICH MAY PROBABLY DRAW SIGHS FROM MANY A TENDER HEART OF BOTH SEXES.

THE next morning, running over in my mind the detail of the transactions of the evening before, the vexation I had received on the score of Betty Canning very much subsided, and I looked upon the whole thing as below a serious consideration. I could not help, indeed, retaining some concern that the people of England should be so infatuated as to suffer their thoughts to be led astray and alienated from affairs of the greatest consequence by such an idle story; but as I doubted not but that the imposition she had been guilty of would be detected, though her abettors might perhaps find means to screen her person from the punishment, I became more easy, and resolved to banish, as much as possible, all remembrance of it.

But my ideas were widely different in regard to poor Clerimont. As much a stranger as he was to me, I was convinced, by what I had seen and heard, that as he had no stock of ready money to prevent the mortgage he had made of his reversion, so I was equally assured, by his despair, that he had no visible means of raising a sum sufficient to redeem it. His calling on the name of Charlotte with so much vehemence, made me also not doubt but that he had some tender attachment, which he feared would be broke through by what he had done.

Though I know no vice for which I have a more real contempt than the love of gaming, yet the age of this gentleman, which could not exceed three and twenty, seemed to me a very moving plea in his behalf; and the graces of his mien and aspect so much interested me in his favour, that I less blamed his in-advertency than compassionated the mis-

fortune it had brought him into. In fine, his person and his sufferings had made a very strong impression on me; he was the first object of my waking thoughts; and my impatience to be better acquainted with his circumstances, obliged me to leave my bed some hours before the time in which I was accustomed to do so. I rose in a hurry, transcribed what I have been relating, and got the dialogues expunged from my Tablets by the pure fingers of my little virgin; then hastened to the house where I had seen Clerimont enter the night before, and which, by the help of some lamps in the street, I had taken sufficient notice of to be able to know again. The door was luckily open when I came to it. A servant-maid, who seemed to have more inclination to hold a gossip's tale than to do the business she was hired for, stood leaning with both her hands upon her mop, very earnest in discourse with one of her own occupation in the neighbourhood. A few words served to convince me that these wenches were descanting on the affairs of the families they lived in; which, as I was not at present in a humour to pry into, I staid not to hear what was said, but went directly into the house, and up stairs, supposing Clerimont might be lodged in the first floor. I was not deceived; I found him writing at his bureau in the dining-room. A letter lay by him directed to Count Cogdy: this was folded, and ready for sealing, so it was not in my power to examine the contents; but his pen, on my entrance, was employed on another; which, looking over his shoulder, I saw was dictated in the following terms—

My only dear, and forever dear CHARLOTTE!

A Thousand heart-rending sighs, a thousand pangs more terrible than any death can inflict, accompany every syllable of this distracted epistle! I foresee the anguish it will give you, and feel all the weight of yours added to my own. Oh, Charlotte! I must see you no more! That love, so long cemented by the utmost proofs of mutual tenderness, and so near being fulfilled in a happy union, must be now broke off at once—dissolved forever! I have renounced all claim to every future good, and justly incurred the fate that now attends me. A few
hours

‘ hours will inform you, that I either
 ‘ do not exist at all, or exist only to
 ‘ be a vagrant! a wretched exile from
 ‘ father, country, friends, and you,
 ‘ more dear than all! In fine, my
 ‘ Charlotte, such is the sad necessity to
 ‘ which I have reduced myself, as com-
 ‘ pels me to do a thing which nature
 ‘ most abhors; I go this morning either
 ‘ to kill or be killed: which of these two
 ‘ shall happen, is in the hand of Heaven;
 ‘ each equally tears me from every
 ‘ earthly comfort. I chose to acquaint
 ‘ you previously with this accident, to
 ‘ the end you may be the less surprized
 ‘ when you shall hear it from the mouth
 ‘ of others. I can say no more. Fare-
 ‘ wel, thou loveliest, best, and dearest
 ‘ of thy sex! Hate not the memory of
 ‘ the undone

‘ CLERIMONT.

‘ P. S. As I have rendered myself
 ‘ unworthy of preserving any marks
 ‘ of your affection, I return the
 ‘ ring with which you blessed my
 ‘ finger in our happier days. Ac-
 ‘ cept once more my last adieu!
 ‘ May endless blessings await you,
 ‘ superior, if possible, to my woes!’

This unhappy gentleman dissembled
 not in the lines he wrote; his heart now
 laboured with agonies greater than could
 be expressed with words, and shewed
 themselves in every look and gesture.
 After having carefully inclosed the ring,
 and put both that and the letter under a cov-
 er, he ordered a chairman to be called;
 and delivering to him both these dis-
 patches, and telling him where they were
 to be carried, he proceeded to give some
 farther instructions—‘ This, to Miss
 ‘ Charlotte, you are to leave with her
 ‘ servant, with orders to give it to her
 ‘ lady when she is stirring; this, to Count
 ‘ Cogdy, requires an immediate answer,
 ‘ which you must wait for.’ The fel-
 low, having assured him that he would
 be punctual in obeying his commands,
 went on his errand; and Clerimont con-
 tinued walking backwards and forwards
 in the room, with a motion extremely
 discomposed; then threw himself down on
 a settee, and presently seemed buried, as
 it were, in a profound reverie.

I am pretty certain it was a full half
 hour before he exchanged this fixed and
 death-like position for one in a quite
 contrary extreme; his looks and ges-

tures now, methought, had somewhat
 like frantick in them; he beat his head
 against the wainscot, stamped, and ever
 and anon burst into the most vehement
 exclamations; some of which are these—

‘ How unhappy a creature is man! The
 ‘ very reason we are so proud of makes
 ‘ us miserable! The brutes, equally
 ‘ void of passions as of sorrow, neither
 ‘ feel torments here, nor dread a future
 ‘ hell! What will poor Charlotte say
 ‘ on reading of my letter! How wil
 ‘ my father support the story of my fate,
 ‘ when it shall reach his ears! Wretch,
 ‘ wretch, that I am! born to be a curse
 ‘ to all who love me!’

The return of the chairman brought
 him a little to his senses, and he de-
 manded hastily whether he had got an
 answer from Count Cogdy; to which the
 man replied—

Chairman. No, Sir. I went there
 first, but the people of the house told me
 he was not stirring, nor they believed
 would be for a great while; so I went on
 to Madam Charlotte’s, and left the letter
 with her maid, as your honour bid me:
 but I had not got above half the street,
 before her footboy ran after me, and said
 his lady would speak to me; on which
 I went back with him.

Clerimont. Charlotte already up! that’s
 strange.—What did she say to you?

Chairman. Sir, she only asked where
 the gentleman was that sent the letter by
 me, and whether you were alone. I
 told her you were at home, and that
 there was nobody with you that I saw.
 She said it was very well, and I came
 away; went again to the count’s, and
 waited there till his own man told me
 that his master had not been in bed above
 two hours, and he was sure would not
 rise till twelve or one o’clock at soonest;
 said I might leave the letter, and come
 about that time for an answer. Now
 as I did not know whether that would
 be proper, I thought it best to bring it
 back.

Clerimont. You did well. I shall see
 him myself.

On this the chairman laid down the
 letter on the table; and finding Cleri-
 mont had no farther commands for him,
 withdrew. Clerimont then fell into a
 second pause, but it lasted not long, and
 he cried out—‘ Yes, I will go. And
 ‘ perhaps ’tis better that he did not see
 ‘ my billet; he might have found some
 ‘ way to evade the challenge that I sent

F i ‘ him

him; but I shall now surprize and force him to accept it.

While he was speaking, he stepped to the closet, and brought out a pair of pocket-pistols, with some ammunition to load them with: he was just beginning to perform that work, when the maid of the house came up, and told him a lady desired to speak with him. Clerimont turned hastily about; but before he had time to speak, his fair guest was in the room. Charlotte, (for it was she herself, but extremely disordered both in her dress and looks) on finding how Clerimont was employed, thus accosted him—

Charlotte. Oh, Clerimont! Clerimont! what means that cruel letter you just now sent me? Wherefore these dreadful preparations? Tell me, this instant tell me, or I shall die with apprehension!

Clerimont. Ah, Charlotte! never till now unwelcome to my sight, why, in this fatal moment, dost thou set before me that angelick form, which serves but to remind me more of the heaven I have lost!

Charlotte. Shock not my soul with this despair, yet cruelly conceal from me the cause! I have a right to be made the partner of your griefs as well as joys. Speak, then, I conjure you; let me know all.

Clerimont. I cannot.

Charlotte. You love me not, if you hide aught from me. The worst of evils could not give me half the pain as this uncertainty. Clear, then, the tempest on your brow; compose your mind; remove those murderous instruments from my sight, and—Ha! what's here!

In pointing towards the pistols, she saw the letter directed to Count Cogdy; which she hastily snatched up, and went on, saying—

Charlotte. A letter to that infamous villain!—Ah! then I guess what has happened; some cursed gaming quarrel!—Clerimont, I must read this letter.

Clerimont. You may: it will in part reveal what my tongue has not the power to utter.

Ever since my coming into the room, I had been extremely impatient to see the contents of this billet; so while the lady, with a trembling hand, was breaking open the seal, I slipped behind her, and read, at the same time she did, these lines—

SIR,
I Remember that, in the midst of my confusion last night, you offered to give me my revenge whenever I should demand it; which I now do, and expect you will meet me within an hour in the long field behind the bason in Mary-le-Bon, armed with sword and pistol; for I am not with cards or dice we now must try our skill. You have left me nothing but my life to lose, and I am impatient till I stake it against yours. Come without a second; for I know no gentleman whom I would demean so far as to engage him with any of your infamous associates. If you refuse to comply with this summons, which does you too much honour, you may depend that, the first time I see you, in what place soever it be, I shall make you an example to all scoundrels, cheats, and cowards. So no more at present from

CLERIMONT.

P. S. Send your answer by the bearer.

Charlotte. Then you would fight! would hazard a life so precious to me, only in revenge for being defrauded of a paltry sum! Pray how much have you lost?

Clerimont. My all,

Charlotte. Be more explicit.

He then related to her all the particulars of his misfortune; which, as the reader is already acquainted with, would be needless to repeat. When he had given over speaking, Charlotte, with the greatest serenity and sweetness, said to him—

Charlotte. And is this all that has disconcerted you in so terrible a manner?

Clerimont. What means my Charlotte? Am I not a beggar! irrecoverably a beggar!

Charlotte. How can that be, when you say the writings will be returned to you on payment of a thousand pounds? and am not I in possession of eight times that sum, which, with myself, you are shortly to be master of?

Clerimont. Plunder my Charlotte! No, forbid it honour, justice, love! First let me perish!

Charlotte.

Charlotte. Be not so rash: You must, you shall accept it.

Clerimont. Oh, Charlotte! could I abuse such goodness, I were a villain; meaner, viler far than he that has undone me!

Charlotte. Indeed I will not be denied: and if you persist in this obstinacy, will go myself in person, pay the money, and redeem the obligation.

Clerimont. Oh, speak not, think not, of such a thing, unless you wish to see me turn against myself one of those weapons I intended for my adversary!

Charlotte. Hold, Clerimont! Forbear to fright me thus!—Just as you spoke, a sudden thought started into my head, as if there were a way to rid you of this incumbrance without any expence either to yourself or me.

Clerimont. How! By what miracle!

Charlotte. The project is not yet quite fashioned in my brain. But you must come with me to my lodgings, for I dare not trust you with yourself. As we go, perhaps I may be able to bring my scheme to more perfection.

Clerimont. Oh, Charlotte, thy softness quite unmans me!

Charlotte. No, it is your own despair unmans you. Let me prevail on you to give only some respite to these horrible ideas.

Clerimont. Well, you must be obeyed. I will defer the execution of my intentions till another day.

Charlotte seemed transported at having won thus far upon him; and a coach being called, they both went into it. I listened to the directions given where to drive; and, eager to know what turn this affair would take, followed on foot as fast as I was able.

CHAP. V.

MAY POSSIBLY BECOME THE SUBJECT OF SOME FUTURE COMEDY, AS THERE IS NOTHING IN THE STORY THAT CAN BE OBJECTED TO AT THE LICENCE-OFFICE.

AMONG all the indefatigable enquiries I had so long been making after things intended to be kept secret, never had my curiosity met with a greater disappointment than it did at the time I

am speaking of. I arrived at the house where Charlotte lodged the very moment that the coach which brought that lady and her lover thither was discharged and driving off; and had the mortification to see the door shut when I was not at the distance of above ten paces from it. Every present minute, however, flattering me with the hopes that the succeeding ones would be more successful, I waited, though I cannot say with much patience, about two hours; no one having any occasion, I suppose, either to go in or out. At last a friendly baker knocked at the door; which being opened, I took the opportunity to slip in while he delivered a loaf of bread to the servant of the house.

I went up stairs, and found the persons I sought for in the dining-room. But here, alas! I was a second time disappointed; the grand consultation between them was over before my entrance, and what I heard after I came in could not make me able to form any judgment of the subject they had been upon. I could only know that something of great moment had been concluded, as the reader will easily perceive by the following short dialogue—

Charlotte. You cannot imagine how much you have obliged me by this confession; but I will not detain you, lest the villain should be gone out. Remember to fix the appointment at seven, or between seven and eight, this evening.

Clerimont. Yes, yes.

Charlotte. By that time I shall be able to get every thing in order; and you will see I shall play my part as well as the best actresses of them all. Do you take care that no unguarded look or word gives the count any room to suspect you are less in good-humour than you pretend to be.

Clerimont. Fear not; I shall be cautious not to spoil so good a plot by my ill performance.

Charlotte. If it succeeds, as I have not the least doubt it will, the story will be a subject of mirth for us as lasting as our lives.

Clerimont. And as lasting a subject for my admiration of the wit and contrivance of my dear, dear Charlotte.

Charlotte. Well, well, defer your encomiums till a more seasonable opportunity. I long, methinks, to have this

business over; and it is high time for you to begin to set the first wheel of our machine in motion.

Clerimont. I am going. Adieu, my love.

He accompanied these words with a very tender and passionate salute, then left the room. Though I easily perceived that Charlotte had somewhat of great importance to transact in this affair, yet, as I could not be in two places at once, I chose to follow Clerimont. He went directly to Cogdy's lodgings; and, on asking if he were at home, was shewed into a handsome parlour; where, after waiting about a minute, the count's servant came to him, and said his master had not been long out of bed; and was not quite dressed, but desired he would walk up; which he did, with his Invisible attendant close behind him. The count no sooner saw him enter, than he ran to embrace him with a French complaisance, saying at the same time—

Cogdy. Dear Clerimont, I am glad to see you.

Clerimont. My dear count, a lucky morning to you. I behaved somewhat oddly last night, and could not be easy till I came and asked your pardon.

Cogdy. Oh, Sir, you have it, you have it; I thought no more of it. I know it is natural for a gentleman to be a little out of humour at first losing his money.

Clerimont. But I was less excusable than you imagine; for, to confess the truth, I had, in Bank-bills, upwards of two thousand pounds lying in my bureau at home; so was under no necessity either of playing upon tick, or of troubling a lawyer to mortgage the reversion of my estate.

Cogdy. Is it possible! Are you in earnest?

Clerimont. To convince you I am so, you shall have the testimony of your own eyes. See here, count—and here.

In speaking this, he took out of his pocket-book several bills to the amount of the sum he had mentioned. The count stretched his eyes broad open; looked at the bills, seemed much surprised, and said—

Cogdy. These are Bank-bills, indeed!

Clerimont. Aye, I can turn them into ready specie at any banker's in town.

Cogdy. Well, I cannot help wondering how a man who had two thousand

pounds by him could suffer himself to be disconcerted at the loss of one.

Clerimont. Hang it, it was not the loss of the money that vexed me; but I had the hyppo, and that damned hyp makes one affront one's best friends.

Cogdy. So, then, I suppose you will redeem your mortgage?

Clerimont. Time enough for that. But, now I think on it, you offered me my revenge, and I'll e'en try my chance once more.

Cogdy. As how?

Clerimont. Why, stake one of these thousands against my mortgage, so either win the horse or lose the saddle.

Cogdy. With all my heart: whenever you please.

Clerimont. Let it be to-night, then.

Cogdy. Agreed. Will you stay and dine with me?

Clerimont. I am engaged with a young fellow just come to town, and to the possession of a great estate; but I will meet you at night, and perhaps bring him with me.

Cogdy. Do; I shall be glad of his acquaintance.

Clerimont. We knew one another in the country: he will go any where with me.—But, harkye, count, I don't like that house: we were in last night; every thing in it, methinks, has the face of poverty and ill-luck. My young spark is vastly nice, and will be apt to turn up his nose at it. Can't you think of a more agreeable place?

Cogdy. I know of several. The only reason that makes me chuse to go thither so often is, because I think it the most safe. This cursed act of parliament has laid such restriction on us who love play, that it is not every where we dare venture to indulge ourselves in that diversion.

Clerimont. What objection have you to Mixum's, in ***** Street?

Cogdy. 'Tis a good house, and excellent accommodation. But don't you know that it was searched three or four nights ago by a whole posse of constables?

Clerimont. Yes, but they found nothing of what they came to look for; therefore the most secure at present, as they will scarce come again in haste.

Cogdy. Well, then, we will meet there, if you please. At what hour?

Clerimont. Seven, or a little after, if it suits you.

Cogdy.

Cogdy. Extremely well: then we shall have the whole evening before us.

He was about to take his leave, and had rose up for that purpose, when Wheedle, Hazard, and Coaxum, came all together into the room; they seemed a little surprized at seeing him there, but saluted him with their usual familiarity.

Hazard. Hah! dear Clerimont, good morning to you.

Wheedle. Now you look like yourself again; you were quite another man last night.

Coaxum. Aye, faith, you must expect to be well roasted.

Clerimont. I know I deserve it. But you must defer your sarcasms till night, for I am in great haste at present; so, gentlemen, your servant.

He was going out of the room with these words; but, just as he came to the door, he turned back, and said to Count Cogdy—

Clerimont. Be sure, count, not to forget to bring the writings with you.

Cogdy. No, no; they have never been out of my pocket since you delivered them to me last night.

There passed no more between them: Clerimont went hastily down stairs, and I gladly would have followed him; but Hazard and Wheedle happened to stand between the door and the corner where I had unluckily posted myself, so that it was impossible for me to remove my quarters without running a very great risque of being felt either by the one or the other. During the short time I was compelled to stay, I heard the following conversation, which I would not trouble my readers with the repetition of, but to shew what monsters of mankind these degenerate wretches are who get their livelihood by gaming.

Coaxum. What does he mean by writings? Sure he is not going to redeem his mortgage!

Cogdy. No; but he is going to send a thousand, or, it is likely, two thousand pounds, after it. We have made an appointment to play again to-night.

Hazard. What, upon tick?

Wheedle. Phoo! that is doing of nothing; the fool has no more estates in reversion to make over.

Cogdy. You cannot imagine me so weak as to lose my time with a fellow that has no money nor effects; no, no,

I always go upon good grounds. I tell you he has two thousand pounds in Bank-bills; he shewed them to me.

Hazard. How did he come by them?

Cogdy. 'Tis no matter to us how he came by them; we are sure of making them ours before we sleep.

Wheedle. They must certainly be bills his father has intrusted him with to buy stock either for himself or some of his friends in the country. The young fellow will hang himself to-morrow, when he reflects on what he has done.

Hazard. Let him hang himself, when we have got all he has to lose!

Cogdy. Aye, aye. But I can tell you better news than this: he brings a rich young heir with him; one that knows nothing of the world; a mere sap, a greenhorn. There will be fleecing, my boys!

Just as the count had done speaking, some little noise in the street made them all run to the windows; by which means I got the so much wished-for opportunity of escaping from my confinement. When I found myself at liberty, I began to consider not only on what I had seen and heard, but also on what I had not seen nor heard. I was still as much in the dark as ever as to Charlotte's contrivance, and could not keep myself from fretting at the many disappointments I had met with on that account; I was doomed, however, to receive yet one more.

Though I doubted not but when the gamesters met the whole would be laid open to me, yet the time seemed too tedious for my impatience. I wanted to know the business of the plot before I saw it acted, and set myself to think on the most probable means to accomplish my designs. Accordingly I went to the lodgings of Charlotte, hoping to find Clerimont there, and discover something farther by the discourse they would have together; but, to my great mortification, perceived the rooms quite empty, excepting a little lap-dog lying on a cushion before the fire. I had now no other resource than to go home to dinner, which I did; and after having got my Tablets made ready to receive a new impression, diverted myself in the best manner I could till the hour arrived which enabled me to explore what at present appeared so mysterious to me.

C H A P. VI.

WILL PUT A FINAL PERIOD TO THE
SUSPENCE OF MY READERS, IN
RELATION TO CLERIMONT AND
CHARLOTTE.

AS precious a thing as time is, and as much as I always knew the real value of it, the hours, methought, moved slowly on till the clock struck seven, and told me that I might now hope for the full eclaireissement of an adventure I had already taken so much fruitless pains to explore. Pretty secure, however, that I should not lose my labour any more on this occasion, I went with great glee and jollity of mind to the house of Mr. Mixum. Count Cogdy and his three associates came presently after, and were shewn into the best room, where I accompanied them. On their calling for wine, Mixum came up with it himself, to pay his compliments, as not having seen them for a considerable time; and there ensued some discourse concerning the search-warrant that had been granted against the house, the manner in which those persons who were there had made their escape from the officers, and such like affairs; which not being at all material to my purpose, I regarded not, nor spread my Tablets to receive.

Within about half an hour Clerimont and his young friend appeared. The first sight of the latter extremely struck me; I thought I had somewhere seen that face, but when, or where, or on what occasion, I could not presently recollect, and it was some minutes before I knew this seeming beau for a real belle; in fine, it was no other than Charlotte herself. She was, indeed, so artfully disguised in all points, that a person much better acquainted with her features might have been deceived; her cheeks, which had naturally no more red in them than was necessary to preserve her complexion from the character of a dead paleness, were now, by the help of carmine or Portugal paste, of a high ruddy colour; her eye-brows, which were of a fine light brown, were now black as jet; and that sweet and modest air so becoming in the amiable Charlotte, converted into one all bold and rakish.

Clerimont, with a well-dissembled gaiety in his voice and countenance, presented her to the company, telling them he had taken the liberty to introduce a friend, whose conversation he doubted not would be agreeable to them. They received her with the greatest politeness and good-breeding: for I must here observe, that though these men, either through the calamities of the times, or their own mismanagement and ill-conduct, were reduced to the wretched course they now took for subsistence, they had all of them been endowed with a liberal education, and knew how to behave like persons of real honour and fashion whenever they found it suitable to their interest to do so. The glass went round two or three times, while they talked only on ordinary matters; but our fair Amazon being impatient, I suppose, to put the finishing stroke to the stratagem she had formed, started up on a sudden; and said—

Charlotte. Well, but, gentlemen, how are we to pass the evening? I hope in something more agreeable than mere chit-chat? Clerimont talked of play, and I see you have implements ready.

Cogdy. Sir, we amuse ourselves that way sometimes; and, if you chuse it, shall be ready to oblige you.

Charlotte. Oh, by all means. I love play extravagantly: the musick of a dice-box is to me beyond all Handel's operas and oratorios; here is more real harmony than in the spheres themselves, and I could dance eternally to the sound. Come, gentlemen, which of you will engage me? I have some loose pieces in my pocket, which I am ready to throw away, if chance should so determine.

Hazard. Then, Sir, I am your man, if you think fit; for I know the count has made an agreement to play with Clerimont on a very particular occasion.

Charlotte. Then, Sir, I will content myself a while with being a by-stander.

Hazard. You need not, Sir; you see here are more tables than one.

Charlotte. Aye; but I chuse to bet on my friend's side.

Hazard. Nay, as you please for that; we shall any of us be ready to take you up.

The count and Clerimont being now in an attitude to play, and the writings laid down on the one side, and a thousand pound

pound Bank-bill on the other, Charlotte cried out—

Charlotte. What! paper against parchment! These are the oddest stakes I ever saw. Yours, Clerimont, I think, is a thousand pounds?

Cogdy. I assure you, Sir, that mine is the full equivalent.

Charlotte. I believe so. But, before you begin, you must give me leave to speak a word or two.

Cogdy. As many as you please, Sir.

Charlotte. It is only this—You must lose, count.

Cogdy. Must lose, Sir!

Charlotte. Aye, Sir, must lose.

Cogdy. That, Sir, will happen, as Fortune shall decree.

Charlotte. Sir, I stand in the place of Fortune, and tell you that you must lose those writings to Clerimont.

Hazard. What means all this!

Cogdy. I do not understand you, Sir.

Charlotte. I will speak plainer. Your false dice will be of no service to you at this time. You must willingly return to Clerimont that deed of reversion which you drew him in to sign as a security for money you had basely cheated him of: I say willingly; for, if you do not, I am come prepared with means to force you to it.

Cogdy. Sir, I scorn both your words and threats. I never cheated any man; nor will part with what chance has bestowed upon me.

Hazard. 'Sdeath! shall we be bullied by such a prigl

Charlotte. None of your big words; I have that will silence you. See here, the copy of a warrant from Justice Ferrit, to apprehend and bring before him the bodies of George Van Hellmock, alias Count Cogdy, John Hazard, Thomas Wheedle, and William Coaxum. The original of this is in the hands of persons who, on the least stamp of my foot, will come up and put it in execution.

The gamesters now looked on each other with all the marks of consternation; but, before they had time to make any reply to what Charlotte had said, Mixum, all pale and trembling, came running into the room, and said—

Mixum. Oh, gentlemen, we are all undone! Three or four constables are at the door; one of my drawers saw them as he went out to carry a pint of wine to a neighbour's house; and there

is a young man below, too, who I dare say is a spy; for he does not stay in the room, but walks backwards and forwards in the entry, and looks at every body as they pass by; so that there is no escaping, either one way or the other.

Charlotte. He tells you truth; the person he speaks of is planted there by me, and, on my giving the signal, will call in his myrmidons; so that you have nothing for it but to deliver the writings quietly to Clerimont: if you do this, I will instantly go down, and send away the officers, under pretence that the information was wrong, and that no gamesters are here.

Cogdy. Confusion! What is to be done!

Hazard. 'Sdeath, count, do not part with the writings! We'll fight our way through them!

Charlotte. Nay, then, I give the signal.

She advanced towards the door with these words; but Mixum threw himself between, and, with the most pity-moving gesture, said—

Mixum. Hold, Sir, I beseech you! Consider, I never offended you! Do not ruin me and my house for ever!

Clerimont. Oh, you will be provided with lodgings in Bridewell, and fare no worse than these worthy gentlemen here, your customers.

Cogdy. Well, I did not think Mr. Clerimont would have turned informer.

Clerimont. Nor did I think I had associated myself with common sharpers, cheats, and villains, till last night convinced me of it.

Charlotte. These altercations are only loss of time; the officers will be impatient. Speak, count, resolve at once; shall I dismiss, or call them to the exercise of their function?

Cogdy. Hell and the devil!—What say you, gentlemen?

Wheedle. E'en give up the writings, and the devil go with them!

Coaxum. Aye, aye, give them up.

Hazard. Since there is no remedy, I give my vote.

Cogdy. Nothing vexes me so much as to be thus outwitted, gulled, tricked.—There, Mr. Clerimont, take back your mortgage. But I must tell you, Sir, that you have not acted like a gentleman.

Clerimont. I threw off the gentleman when I condescended to play in such

such company. A gamester is the lowest and most infamous of all characters; nay, the most dangerous, too; worse even than a highway robber; he takes but part; you plunder, without remorse, the whole fortune of him whom you decoy into your snares. Nor can there be any excuse from your necessities, while we have so numerous a fleet and standing army, which are continually wanting recruits, and refuse none who have health and vigour.

Cogdy. Sir, you have got what you wanted; so pray keep your remonstrances to yourself.

Charlotte. Aye, aye, advice is lost on such hardened profligates. Come, let us go.

Clerimont. I attend you.

Neither Clerimont nor his fair champion said any more, but went directly out of the room: a volley of curses from the mouths of all these miscreants pursued their steps. I had no inclination to stay where I was; but, just as I passed the door, I heard Jack Hazard, who was the most violent of the four, say to his companions—'It is that saucy, pert, young coxcomb, that has spirited up Clerimont to do all this: but if ever I meet him in a convenient place, I'll pink him—I'll make a loop-hole in his flesh big enough to let out twenty such puny souls.'

I could not forbear laughing within myself at this menace; which, though it shewed the villainous disposition of the wretch who spoke it, I knew it was impossible ever to reach the person it was levelled against. The amiable and witty Charlotte kept her promise; and, on her coming down stairs, gave orders to the young man who waited her commands to send away the constables; after which she took coach with her lover, attended with as many blessings and good-wishes from Mixum, as she had been loaded with curses from those above.

As I could expect no more from this adventure than the retributions of Clerimont to his beloved Charlotte, for the happy deliverance she had given him from destruction, and which I could easily conceive without hearing, I returned to my own apartment, in order to get my Tablets made ready for the acquisition of some new discovery. I must not, however, take leave of these lovers, without letting the publick know that a marriage between them, which

had some time before been agreed upon, is now consummated; and that Clerimont, sincerely touched with the danger he has escaped, has made a firm resolution never to play but for small sums, and for those only with persons whose honour and integrity he is well assured of. As for the gamesters, they still continue to infest this great town, like a ran, watching to devour all the prey they can get into their clutches. If the little narrative may warn any person to avoid the snare, the pains I have taken to explain it will be well rewarded.

CHAP. VII.

CONTAINS SOMETHING WHICH PERHAPS THERE ARE MORE LADIES THAN ONE WILL NOT THINK THEMSELVES OBLIGED TO THE AUTHOR FOR REVEALING.

THERE is no resentment so implacable and lasting as that which is occasioned by love converted into hatred by ill treatment; and by the more slow degree this passion rises in our minds, the more virulent it becomes after having once gained possession.

Cleanthes, a gentleman of good family, great worth, and opulent estate, loved to the most romantick excess a young woman who, excepting a tolerable share of beauty, had no one real charm to recommend her to a person of his character. She was meanly born, more meanly educated; she was silly, vain, capricious, and of a reputation not quite unblemished. Yet did he no sooner become acquainted with her, than he broke off the addresses he had long made to a lady of great merit and fortune; and, in a short time, contrary to all the remonstrances and dissuasions of his friends, publicly married her.

Being a husband made him not less a lover. His obsequiousness is not to be paralleled; his whole study was to please her; every succeeding day brought with it an addition of his dotage of her; he was always happy in her presence, never easy in her absence; and, to use Shakespeare's expression—

'Appetite increas'd by what it fed on.'

Auglara, for so she is called, had so little sense of the happiness she enjoyed,

joyed, or affection or gratitude for the man who bestowed it on her, that she presently gave the greatest loose to her too amorous inclinations; thought of nothing but engaging new admirers; and, to that end, made advances, which it would be shocking to repeat, to every pretty fellow she came in company with, even before the face of her much-injured husband; who, blinded by his passion, for a long time looked on all that she did as proceeding only from the too great vivacity of her temper. Had she observed the least degree of circumspection in her amours, he would scarce ever have believed there was a possibility of her being guilty; but she took no pains to deceive him; and though she knew he lived but in her sight, was scarce ever at home; and, through the want either of artifice or complaisance, gave herself not the pains of making any excuses for her continual rambles.

This made him at last fall into a deep melancholy; yet still he loved her, and could not for a great while prevail on himself to lay any restrictions on her conduct. All who had any knowledge of the manner in which they lived together, while they highly condemned her treatment of him, were ready to despise his lenity and forbearance. At length, however, the tables were entirely turned; from having been at first the most fond, and afterwards the passive husband, he became, all at once, the most cruel and tyrannick: he took from her all the jewels and other ornaments he had bestowed upon her; locked her into a garret; suffered no one to come near her, except a servant, who carried food to her of the coarsest kind, and no more than would just suffice to keep her from perishing.

It cannot be supposed but that so strange an alteration in the behaviour of the late fond, and indeed madly doating Cleanthes, must become the subject of much conversation in town. A lady of my acquaintance, who is reckoned to have some taste for poetry, shewed me a few lines she had wrote on the occasion, which I think may not be disagreeable to my readers. They are as follow—

ON THE PRESENT CRUELTY OF CLEANTHES, TO A WIFE WHOM HE ONCE LOVED TO AS GREAT AN EXCESS.

AS tapers languish at th' approach of
day,
And, by degrees, melt slow their shine
away,
Awhile they glimmer with contracted
fires,
Trembling, unable to relax their spires;
But, when the sun's broad eye is open'd
wide,
And beams, thick flashing, shoot on every
side,
No more their emulative force they try,
But, struck with radiance, sink at once,
and die:
So in his heart love long maintain'd it's
place,
Till full conviction glar'd him in the face,
And forc'd th' unwilling softness to give
way
To hate, and rage, and fierce resentment's
sway.
Unhappy man!
What wild extremes hurry thy head-
strong wil!
What hoist'rous passions thy vex'd bo-
som fill!
To reason's sacred rules a truant still,
Whoe'er he be the golden mean foregoe,
Exchanges hop'd-for joys for certain wiles.

By all the discourses I heard wherever I went concerning this affair, I found, that though scarce any one pitied Aglaure, yet almost every one condemned Cleanthes; no less for his present ill-usage of her, than they had formerly done for the extravagance of his love.

'It is beneath the dignity of a man of sense or honour,' said one, 'to treat thus inhumanly a woman, how unworthy soever she may be, who is yet his wife.'

'If she is really guilty of having wronged his bed,' cried another, 'as indeed there is not the least room to doubt, why, on the discovery of her crime, did he not turn her out of doors? Why did he not sue for a divorce?'

It is certain that his way of proceeding with her appeared so odd, that many people were apt to think that her present sufferings were owing rather to a change in his own humour, than to any detection he had made of her falshood:

G g others,

others, on the contrary, imagined he still loved her; and that, after he had punished her a while, he would forgive all that was past, and again take her to his bosom. Various and widely different conjectures were formed in relation both to the husband and the wife; at all which I laughed in my sleeve, believing, I dare say with a good deal of reason, that no one person in the whole world, except the Invisible Spy, was at the bottom of this secret. The means by which I became master of it I shall now acquaint my readers with.

I supped one night at the house of an intimate friend at Kensington; and happening to stay there more late than it was judged safe for me to go home alone, was very much pressed by him to take a servant with me; but knowing I had a better security about me than any servant could be, rejected his offer; and when I was got a little way from the house, girded on my Belt of Invisibility, and walked on at my leisure, equally free from danger as from fear.

Many minutes had not elapsed in this employment, before I was disturbed from it by the murmurs of some human voices, which I heard at a small distance. My natural curiosity making me draw nearer to the place whence the sound proceeded, I easily distinguished a man of good appearance holding by the arm a genteel well dressed woman, whom he seemed rather to drag than lead. As these persons were no other than Cleanthes and Aglaura, I shall insert what was said by each of them under their respective names.

Cleanthes. Shameless wretch!—Can you call it an innocent frolick to come to the door of a publick coffee-house, and send in for your gallant? Had I not happened to be there, had not these eyes and ears been witnesses of your guilt, you might, and doubtless would, have denied, forsworn it.

Aglaura. I meant no harm: I only wanted to railly him a little about something I had heard concerning him.

Cleanthes. Infamous, abandoned prostitute! Have I not an hundred times insisted on your never speaking to that fellow more, nor to that other coxcomb, Le Brune? yet, had you not the front to run arm in arm this morning with the one into the vineyard, in the face of the whole Mall, and at night

came in pursuit of the other!—But this is no time for expostulation; I am now convinced of the injury you have done me.

I kept pretty near to them, till they went into a coach, and drove away; and I went home so much astonished at what I had heard, that I had not power to make any reflections on it for some time.

My mind, however, grew more settled by a night's repose; and, impatient to know how they would behave to each other after what had passed, I went directly to their house. Cleanthes was up, alone, and at breakfast. Soon after my entrance, a servant-maid came in, and said to him—

Maid. Sir, my lady has called for a dish of chocolate, but I would not presume to carry any up without your permission, as your orders last night were so positive that she should be fed with nothing but water-gruel and dry bread.

Cleanthes. Why, then, do you trouble me now? Do you think I gave orders at night to retract them in the morning? Be gone, and let me hear no more of it.

The maid withdrew, and I followed her to the room where Aglaura was now lodged, which was indeed a wretched garret. She was in bed, weeping; but, on the maid's repeating the commands of Cleanthes, her tears flowed faster: she wrung her hands, she beat her breast. But it is more easy for the reader to conceive her despair, than for me to express it; so I shall only say the spectacle was too moving, I could not bear it, but left the house immediately, and returned not thither till eight or ten days; in which time the town was apprized of the suffering of Aglaura, and spoke of the strange change of Cleanthes in the manner I have already related.

On my next visit, Cleanthes had with him an elderly lady, who I afterwards understood was his aunt. She came, it seems, to persuade him to treat his transgressing wife with less severity. The discourse between them was as follows—

Lady. I am as sensible as you can be of the faults of Aglaura, and the dishonour she has brought upon you; yet, my dear nephew, you demean yourself by using in this fashion a woman who, though unworthy, is still your wife.

Cleanthes. Madam, I can no longer think

think of her as a wife, not even as a woman; but as a dog that had bit me, or a serpent that had stung me.

Lady. Put her, then, out of your house.

Cleantes. That would be giving her an opportunity of disgracing me more by her prostitutions. No, since I have not proofs for a divorce, I will confine her here till I can send her forever from my sight. I have already wrote to a tenant of mine in Yorkshire; he will be in town next week, and take her with him to his house.

The good lady took her leave, after having heard and approved this resolution; which, as I have been since informed, he put in execution as he had said.

THE CONCLUSION.

HERE, O reader! a total stop is put to my endeavours to oblige thee. Nature has baffled all my vain precau-

tions to preserve my little virgin in her native purity. The woman whom I appointed to attend her accidentally dropped from her pocket the picture of a very lovely youth; the girl, unfortunately for me, as well as for thee, took it up, and was charmed with it: sleep renewed the pleasing image in her mind, and added life and motion to it; she dreamed that it was her bedfellow; that it kissed, embraced, and lay within her arms; so that, in spite of all my cares, and without ever having seen the substance of a man, she has received an idea of the difference of sexes.

Her pretty fingers no longer have the power to cleanse my Tablets; the dialogue last repeated remains still unpunged, and leaves no room for any future impression. How grievous a disappointment to me! how terrible a mortification!—But we must all submit to destiny, which compels me now to bid thee eternally adieu! adieu! adieu!

FINIS.

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BRIT
4 AP

My dear Mr. Garrison,
I have always written to you from my
room at the Hotel de la Ville, but I have not
yet had time to do so since I came to New York.
I will send you a letter by the first mail
train, and I hope it will reach you before
you leave for England.

The small body took her leave after being kissed and approved this note in her hand, and I have been since in the habit of putting in exercises as she had



